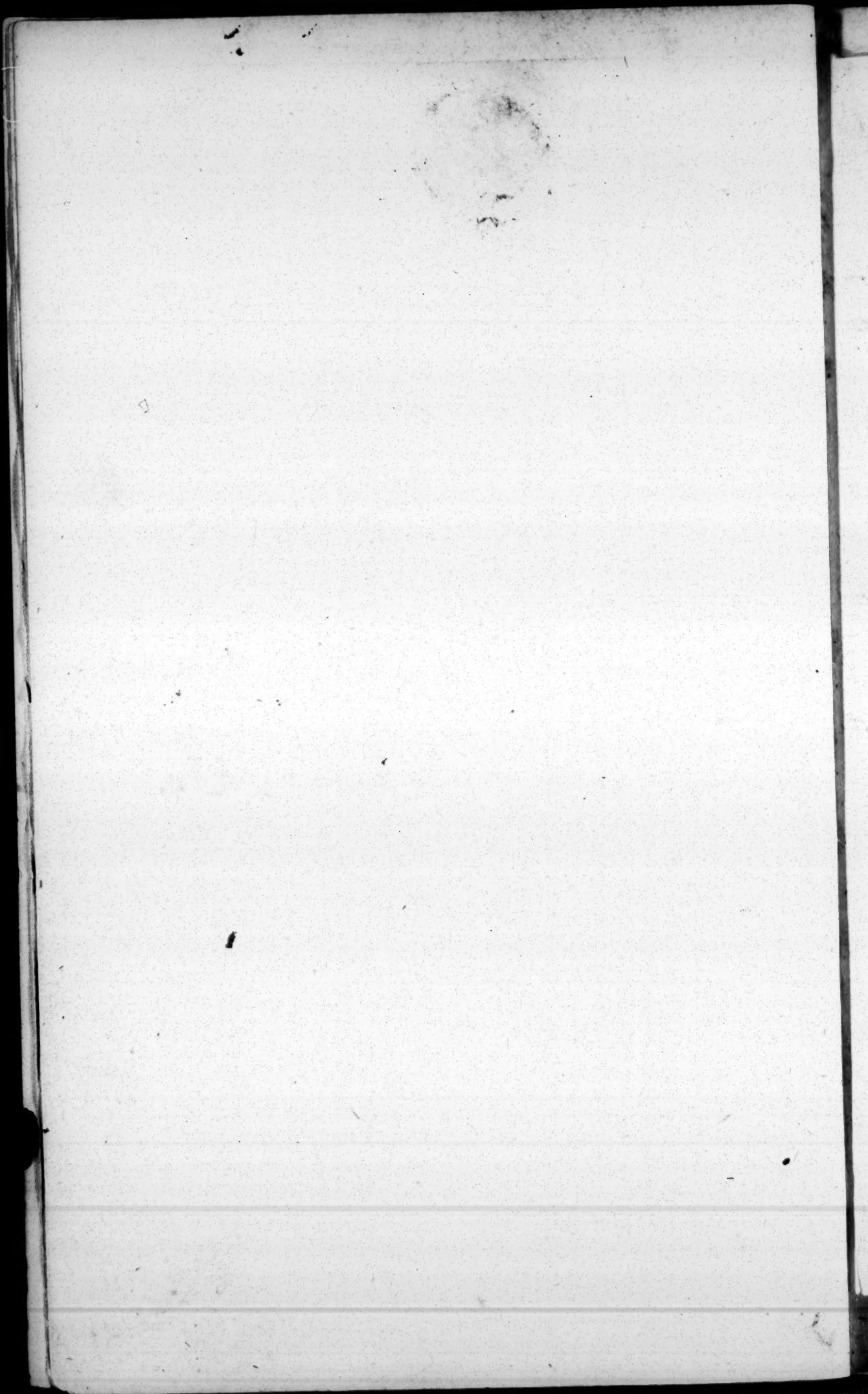


A

POLITICAL ENQUIRY

INTO THE CONSEQUENCES OF

Enclosing Waste Lands, &c.



6-61



it is a misfortune in Language to have different Ideas expressed by the same Name. viz. Waste, when applied to Land, does not convey the same Idea, as when annexed things of less estimation, tho' in common acceptance. The term, Waste Land is too often, taken as a term for a thing of no value or esteem:

Whatsoever can be rendered useful in ever so small a Degree, I own, I cannot see a Right propriety, it can be deemed Waste. — a good Husbandman will let no Land lie waste; — a Botanist admits no such term, as Waste, what may be deemed such, in Agriculture or Gardening, is in Botany respected and placed in its due rank in the Scale, of Natural productions. —

it has been remarked thro' Holland, that to every little Cottage by the way side, if but a few yards of Glebe was annexed to the Hoeel, was hived to the utmost advantage by the poor inhabitant, consequently no waste there. —

tho' a strange reverse may be found thro' Engl^d in almost every Cottage on a Common — a remarkable instance of the indolence of the English poor & of Industry of the Hollanders.

A

6-61
1366

POLITICAL ENQUIRY

INTO THE CONSEQUENCES

Of Enclosing Waste Lands,

AND THE CAUSES OF THE

PRESENT HIGH PRICE

OF

BUTCHERS MEAT.

BEING

The SENTIMENTS of a SOCIETY of FARMERS
in ———shire.

Venio nunc ad voluptates agricolarum, quibus ego incredibiliter delector: sed ea ipsa quæ dixi fuisse sentio longiora—ignoscetis autem, nam et studio rerum rusticarum profectus sum, et Senectus est natura loquacior.—Agro bene culto nil potest esse nec usu uberius nec specie ornatius; ad quem fruendum, non modo non retardat, verum etiam invitat, atque allecat Senectus.

CICERO de Senectute.

Printed for L. DAVIS, Holborn.

M.DCC.LXXXV.

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T H E

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

I HAVE had some personal experience in *practical* farming, but am so little conversant with modern books on that subject as to be a very incompetent judge of their merits. I have reason to believe, however, that writers *not brought up in the arts of Agriculture from their childhood*, can never acquire such an established intimate knowledge and such feelings on the subject, as to enable them to state the general system in its true light ; therefore their productions ought not to be considered in any other point of view, how ingenious soever they may be, than as speculations. As such, though to men of fortune they may afford ideas for amusing, and sometimes, perhaps, for profitable experiments ; yet from the great uncertainty of success, they are
not

not to be regarded as *guides* whereby farmers are to gain a livelihood, and provide for their families.

ADMITTING this to be the case, the reader will agree with me in thinking it somewhat unfortunate for agriculture, that lawyers, physicians, private gentlemen, clergymen, and many who have *no local habitation or a name*, should write and publish in abundance; yet very few, if any, should start forth authors on the subject, who have been regularly brought up from their youth to the employment.

It has been asserted, that though farmers aim at making a mystery of their business in conversation with gentlemen; yet their transactions lying open to observation, there is no person of common sagacity and attention, residing upon the spot, but may soon become acquainted with their system of conduct. Now I have reason to believe that there are at least three mysteries in practical farming,
which

which gentlemen in general are not aware of, and which must long, if not for ever, remain a secret to the mere observer, viz. 1st. The nature of the specific ground he is to work.—2d. The buying and selling, and due management of the animals necessary to be kept.—And 3dly. The acquiring the good will of the clowns, and thence forming and establishing a reciprocal confidence between himself and those whom he employs; without which, I apprehend it has been seldom found that any person hath farmed to advantage.—The first two indeed are to be acquired; but 'tis only by close attention and long experience.—The last I believe is scarcely ever obtained, but by those who have been brought up from their childhood among the clowns, whom they consider as of their own class. Observation has convinced me, that it gives the clown pleasure to delude and mislead *the gentleman* in his notions of farming; and this disposition arises partly from a jealousy lest the gentleman should know as much as himself;

himself; and partly from the haughty contemptuous manner in which he is frequently treated.

THE reader will easily discover by the style and composition of the treatise now offered, that it is not the performance of a theoretic writer, nor of a society of gentlemen who imagine they understand farming by their studies or their conversations; he will perceive it to contain the sentiments of real farmers, who derive from experience the knowledge they have here exhibited.

THE writer, or rather the amanuensis of this publication, resides in the country, and has for many years been my much esteemed friend. He is rather singular in this, that though not destitute of classical learning, or general knowledge, he yet received his education among rustics, and has bestowed the greatest part of his time and attention in the cultivation of a farm.

I AM

I AM aware that the language made use of may be thought, in some places, blunt and obsolete, and even vulgar; in others, positive and dogmatical; in others, too ludicrous for a subject of so grave a nature; in others, labouring to be understood, therefore tautological, and ill-concerted to please a refined ear.

IN answer to these objections, take the writer's own words. — “ I can truly
 “ declare,” said he, “ respecting myself,
 “ that I entertain the same sentiments
 “ with Cicero, as quoted in the title
 “ page.—*I profess farming to be a subject
 wherein I am incredibly delighted, possibly what
 hath afforded me much pleasure in the writing
 may to others seem tiresome, but I claim your
 excuse; I am on my favourite topic, and old
 age is apt to be loquacious; however, I ap-
 prehend no employment to be more useful, nor
 ornamental, than the management of a well
 cultivated farm.—It is moreover a pleasure,
 which not only does not forbid, but even invites
 and attracts old age to enjoy.*

b

“ As

“ As to style, I have always under-
 “ stood excellence to consist chiefly in
 “ making use of such words as were most
 “ suitable to the subject, and of course
 “ the most easily comprehended. I con-
 “ sider that it would be out of character
 “ in the present case, to aim at the beau-
 “ ties of language. In order to be man-
 “ ly, clear and concise, I have in general
 “ adopted the plain simplicity of my
 “ club of farmers, with very few altera-
 “ tions.” He observed that, while treat-
 ing on facts of which he is certain, he
 should be guilty of affected modesty, un-
 becoming his character as a farmer, were
 he to assume a diffidence in the statement
 of them. With regard to being some-
 times ludicrous, he said many of the posi-
 tions laid down in modern treatises, tho’
 decorated by scientific language, together
 with the conduct of those who adhered to
 them, were standing matter for jokes.
 That a pamphlet noticed in the following
 sheets had afforded a subject for mer-
 riment; and had indeed been partly the
 occasion

occasion of the present treatise:—the club having thought proper to determine, that a confutation of the author's opinions should be the ground work for offering their own thoughts, long since unalterably fixed, respecting the enclosures of waste lands. — He added that he never could be induced to think that *gravity* was essential to wisdom, on the contrary he believed he should die in the sentiment of his old friend Horace,

Ridentem dicere verum quid vetat?

He was sensible that he had erred in the frequent use of egotisms; yet as elegance was not his aim, he would very readily give up all the merit of it, provided those egotisms should render his assertions more satisfactory and convincing to a certain class of his readers; and wished to have it remembered, that by the pronoun I, is in general, meant, *we the Society*, except where he expressly writes of himself as an individual. Respecting *tautology*, he allowed that there might be frequent repetitions, which yet, in some

cases, however, may not be altogether improper; for as the present publication is intended for the perusal of practical husbandmen, in order *that they may bear testimony* to these *truths*, as well as for the *information* of others; and as he apprehended their judgments to be equally sound, in matters wherein they are competent to judge, yet in general their conceptions are less quick, and their memories less accurate than those of men liberally educated; therefore how disgusting soever repetitions may prove to the refined scholar, plain people frequently find them very convenient. But said he, why should I further aim at justifying my style of writing? Were I to succeed in making an elegant composition, the learned might perhaps compliment me by saying *the book reads well*; and afterwards probably it might be thrown aside, and no more thought of. In that case, to what good purpose could such commendations tend? for frequently that which merits the commendations of the literary world on account of the style of writing,

If by Agriculture we are to understand
 no more than what the bare word defines, the tilling
 of our land, it gives ~~but~~ a very narrow, limited & confined
 an Idea, but if we take it in its more enlarged sense
^{will} comprehend the management of the whole produce
 of the land, as well Cattle, as Corn &c. in such sense
 Agriculture is said to be the Parent of Industry,
 & Wealth — surely then Industry has been greatly
 discouraged and Wealth squandered by discouraging
 Small farming: — so that the word Agriculture
 may be converted to the Person and go by the
 name of Husbandman — will comprehend
 a Man of understanding as a Shepherd, the
 primary profession in Rural life. a Grazier, as one
 'versed in breeding & Managem^t. of Herds as well
 for the Plough as the Dairy, & not only the Horned
 Cattle but Horses, Grain was the last to draw
 the Attention of the Farmer to cultivate for food.



writing, may be unintelligible to the farmer. In a treatise of this nature, the enquiries should be,—Is the writer intelligible? Are his facts true? Does he reason fairly? are his conclusions justly drawn? On these grounds, and these alone, said he, let the merit of my treatise stand or fall.

I AM authorised to add that these thoughts are submitted for the general good in a *political light*, viz. as *information to the legislature*, not as *instructions to farmers how to manage their lands*, which hath been the professed plan of most writers on farming. The subject, here treated of, is of the highest importance to the nation in general; and comprehends, I believe, certain truths hitherto not touched on by former writers, though long known to practical farmers. The persons, whose sentiments are here given, are convinced of the truth of the facts, so far as their experience warrants, yet as that cannot extend to every individual spot

spot throughout the nation, they by no means consider their little work as perfect: on the contrary they are certain that it will admit of very great improvements. Should the reader therefore after perusal think proper to send his remarks they will be cheerfully received, through the hands of the bookseller; and should the future information afford sufficient reasons for the writer to retract his opinions, he hereby pledges himself to publish his recantation, in as open and candid a manner as he has now published his present opinions.

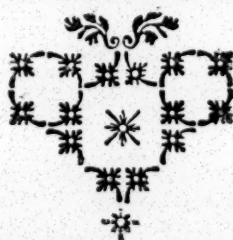
THE following pages may be considered as an essay towards a larger work on the subject; should these meet with approbation, they are intended to be reprinted with such remarks as may occur, on a plan as little expensive as possible, in order that the whole may be distributed and meet the eye of the farmers throughout England, and thereby more fully collect
the

the general opinion on the facts herein set forth.

THE present intention is so far from the prospect of gain, that I am desir'd to assure the reader that such gentlemen as may be pleas'd to communicate their remarks shall be accommodated *gratis* with copies of the future edition, in order that they may be distributed among their country tenants, &c.

I HAVE thus discharged the trust reposed in me by my friend. A trust which would not have been undertaken, had I not been firmly perswaded that the truths are of such a nature as highly to merit the attention of the legislature: for however disagreeable certain truths may be, yet being such, in the present case they cannot be too soon known, and generally propagated; in order that further evils now impending, by further enclosures of waste lands may be averted. I am induced to hope and believe, therefore, that there will not be wanting per-

persons willing to contribute their advice and assistance, to so useful, important, and disinterested an undertaking; so that the general question of the utility or inutility of suffering waste lands to remain uncultivated may be candidly, fully, and truly discussed and investigated.



A FARMER'S

A
FARMER'S
THOUGHTS, &c.

AMONG the many benefits derived to mankind from the Art of Printing, it is allowed that some evils have sprung up. Under this head, I will venture to class the number of empirics in every branch of science, who frequently mislead the world by plausible arguments on subjects whereon they have at best a partial or superficial knowledge.—Hence, futile productions in physic, politics, &c. which tend to unsettle, if not to misguide readers, who are very apt to think their author a *wise man*, if he happens to know a *little more than themselves*.—However, in these *sciences* which are deemed *learned*, such productions create less
A mischief

mischief than in the mechanic arts, agriculture, &c.—the knowledge of which depends so much on practice, that when the speculative philosopher attempts to give the mechanic or the farmer practical instructions, he is perpetually lost in the mazes of error.

SHOULD an empiric in physic, or any other learned science, publish absurd opinions, the better skilled of the same profession detect his absurdities, and the empiric and his performances sink into contempt and oblivion; but it is not so with respect to farming, and many mechanic arts—The farmer, who may be reasonably supposed to know his own business, better than those who never were concerned in such occupation (though it has been the fashion of late years to deny it,) scarce ever reads, much less writes on the subject; whatever absurd doctrines therefore may be propagated in books, they are in very little danger of being publicly confuted by a practical farmer.—Hence an evil arises of great magnitude; literary men, and even the legislature itself, are often deceived by specious writers; the fallacy of whose arguments farmers are seldom able to set forth. Hence arise those disagreements in opinion, so generally observed between the man of science and the farmer—
they

they accuse each other of ignorance and obstinacy; and they seem to have equal reason to do so.

NOTWITHSTANDING the number of books which have been written on farming, a subject which we flatter ourselves is now better understood than at any former period, I cannot allow of more than four authors, who have really given us a system of farming, viz. Virgil in his *Georgics*, Columella, Duhamel, and our countryman Tull.—These did not, like the modern compilers on husbandry, learn a few principles from preceding writers, or gather crude hints in London coffee-houses, &c. nor did they run from county to county to glean up partial, or perhaps romantic details of particular modes of husbandry, with which some practical farmers may have been pleased to amuse them.—No! these four writers were all farmers by profession, and, though farmers, had liberal minds, cultivated by philosophical studies; their good sense and philosophy taught them to deduce just principles from their own daily observation and experience; hence their principles will be found true so long as farming is practised, and their books consulted.—But far otherwise are the writers of late years, although their books may bear the conceited presumptuous titles of *Farmer's Guide*,

*Complete Farmer, &c.** are so full of errors respecting practice, that the experienced husbandman, who might be thought most likely to profit by such writings, very justly despises their systems. Can any man who is conversant in husbandry, think that such books are calculated to make a farmer out of a London tradesman, or country school-boy? No! a man must be endued with great good sense, great experience, patience and attention to be a good farmer, and I believe these qualities are as conspicuous in persons brought up to this employment from their infancy, as in any class of men whatever.

In short, I consider our modern treatises as *farming romances*; some of them inculcate good general principles, and are sometimes innocent even in their *practical* experiments; but by no means to be made a rule of conduct—Such I compare to the novels of Fielding, Richardson, or Smollet, which though they have not exhibited complete systems of morality, yet afford hints for moral conduct.—But who would be mad enough to instruct his son to make *Tom Jones* the model of his conduct through life? The justness of the comparison I could demonstrate by a number of facts which have happened

* By these titles no particular work is meant to be alluded to,

within these last twenty years.—I could give names of honest industrious London tradesmen, who have quitted business with fortunes sufficient to retire upon during the rest of their lives, merely for the sake of turning farmers, upon the plan of Mr. A. or Mr. B. and have died insolvent with broken hearts, or are now languishing in prisons.—Cervantes did not serve his countrymen the Spaniards more in publishing the enthusiastic achievements of Don Quixote, and thereby making them ashamed of their ancient ideas of chivalry, than an author of the present age, possessing sufficient knowledge, wit, and humour, would serve this country, by ridiculing these knights-errant in farming, and preventing future tradesmen from being deluded by these visionary romantic writers, who have published their assurances of the immense riches which might be acquired by adopting their system, delivered *in polysyllabical language, circumvolving throughout their literary performances in fine sounding periods, beyond the comprehension of the illiterate and rusticated professors of agriculture*, and which have induced these honest men to emigrate from their shops, and ignorantly giving high prices for lands, which a farmer from reason and experience refuses, and thereby burying their little property *secundum artem*, according to
the

the rules of their favourite author ; an instance of insanity which I apprehend to be not much inferior to Don Quixote's fighting with a wind-mill. But I shall here pause, lest my grave reader get out of humour ; contenting myself merely with giving the outline, and bequeathing it most willingly to any future writer, who may hereafter think proper, to fill up the canvass.

BUT I apprehend the evil does not rest here. —To my certain knowledge, it has been the custom of land-owners, more particularly within twenty miles of London, for many years past, as soon as a lease is expired, to trick up the house, make the homestall neat, and raise their lands from three to five shillings *per* acre, perhaps more, perhaps less,—rightly supposing, that though the farmers in the neighbourhood should refuse to give that rent, it will catch the eye of a *cockney*, who inflated with an idea of his superior knowledge, compared with that of a common farmer, will think an advance of a few shillings *per* acre of no great importance ; for he shrewdly reasons within himself, that though it may not be worth quite so much now, yet by his improvements it will presently be worth a great deal more. And what's the event ? why, independent of his own ruin, the farm is raised

raised perhaps one fourth above its ancient rent, to the prejudice of the neighbouring farmers, and to the nation at large; and a benefit to no individual but the land-owner.—However, by the by, it is only a *temporary* benefit to *him*; for he must certainly suffer in common with the rest of the people by *every national evil*.

THERE are other evils arising from the publication of these books—the real farmer finding *these new-fashioned farmers*, as they are justly called by way of contempt, succeed so ill in their undertakings when governed by books, determines him to proceed in *his old way*, and rejects every idea of *modern improvement*, from hints frequently to be found in books, which if attended to, and put in practice by gentlemen of property, who hold farms for their amusement, might tend to improve the system of farming in his neighbourhood.

ANOTHER evil is, that London tradesmen, when they become farmers, bringing down their families and connections, introduce expensive luxuries before unknown in the country, and consequently destroy the ancient simplicity of a farmer's life.

THERE is yet an evil arising from these publications, of much greater magnitude than those
I have

I have above stated, because it is of a general and public nature, namely, their tendency to mislead the legislature.—I am convinced that many acts of parliament have been passed of late years, upon the false principles which those books have inculcated.—This circumstance appears to me of great weight.—The evils before mentioned, I have always considered as rather partial and temporary, and such as in time may possibly cure themselves—because the repeated ill success of ignorant adventurers, may in time, deter other tradesmen from turning their mechanical instruments into ploughshares—but an injudicious act of parliament makes the evil permanent and irretrievable.

I wish my reader not to misunderstand my real idea—although I have freely given my opinion that modern farming books have produced much mischief, I mean not to insinuate that every publication has had that tendency; nor would I have it thought, that because I have stated the fatal effects of tradesmen, and other ignorant persons, who have been deluded by injudicious writers, that no one should undertake the employment but such who were brought up to it for the sake of a livelihood—on the contrary, I wish every gentleman of an independent fortune in this kingdom, whose avocations would admit of giving
due

due attention to a farm, would engage in one, and attend to the various hints and observations to be met with in a course of reading—as it would tend to enlighten the minds of the neighbouring farmers, by such improvements as would be obvious ;—and though the farmer be ever so slow in making experiments, yet his own good sense, notwithstanding the obstinacy of which he is accused, will in time prompt him to follow a system which he finds to be beneficial.

JUSTICE and candour oblige me, however, to declare even to these gentlemen, that I do not recommend them to undertake farms for the sake of profit, if they do they will probably be deceived ; the profit arising from cultivation, although conducted with the greatest skill and attention, is, independent of accidents, at best slow and very moderate ; and therefore the profits of a farm to a man who has the means of acting in a higher employment, ought never to induce him to the undertaking, or make him to expect to be paid for his time and trouble.—If he farm, it should be on my principle ; I consider this natural and healthy amusement more pleasing than the artificial diversions of great cities—and if I can farm

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without

without much loss, and at the same time afford any poor industrious neighbours a little advice and assistance, I consider myself as amply rewarded for all my cares and labour. As I have been brought up to farm from my infancy, I have been no loser by the undertaking, but I can never consider it as an object of profit to a gentleman, *experto crede roberto*.

I HAVE been led into this train of thinking more particularly, on account of the late recommendations for the sale of his Majesty's forests, &c. in order that they may be inclosed and cultivated: on a supposition that it would be of great benefit to the nation, in two points of view;—in the first place, that it would bring a great sum of money into the Exchequer; and secondly, that the future produce of those lands, when cultivated, would produce much additional riches to the nation—an idea which I have reprobated, as often as I have heard it advanced; as being founded on ignorance and misconception; and partly from reading a pamphlet lately published, entitled, *Cursory Remarks on the Importance of Agriculture, &c.* The principles the writer has laid down, and the conclusions he has from thence drawn, appear to be so untrue, absurd, and ridiculous, that had I casually met
with

with the book, without knowing the favourable judgment which hath been passed on it in the *Monthly Review**, I should probably, after reading a few pages, have thrown it aside as not worthy a perusal.—The Reviewer, who may be a competent judge of the husbandry of his own neighbourhood, yet if he has not attended to the general system of farming throughout England, will not be offended, it is hoped, if I question his opinion in the present case.

My arguments are grounded on facts, which I imagine, have never yet been made public; and that they are really *facts*, the reader may be assured, because no circumstance is stated herein, but what has passed under my own observation. As my opinion is diametrically opposite to the writer of the pamphlet, and as the commendations of the Reviewer may have great weight—and as the author's reasoning, if approved by the legislature, might be productive of great evil, I consider it as a duty I owe the public, to endeavour to offer my objections, in the best manner I can, to a plan, which, if adopted, might be extremely detrimental to the nation in general, as well as grievous and unjust to individuals.

* See *Monthly Review* for January, 1785.

I AM aware that my opinions are unpopular, both among men of science, and those who mean to improve their estates by enclosures; I therefore run great risk of being condemned; however, as they are founded on truth and fact, I shall venture to inform my countrymen on a subject, which, notwithstanding the number of books which have of late years been published thereon, is still but little understood. I know it to be too much the modern system of writing to flatter the prejudices of mankind: but as I write not for fame, I am less solicitous *to please* than *to instruct*; and though I may combat against opinions adopted in general by men of science, yet I rely so much on their candor and real desire of obtaining truth, as to be persuaded that they will give me a patient reading. Should it be found that I draw fair conclusions from the premises laid down, they will credit them, till they are proved to be wrong.

Now with all due deference to the learned, I beg leave to suggest the reason, as I apprehend, why they have been mislead in their judgments, on the subject of agriculture.—The modern writers on this subject, have commonly set out upon sound philosophical *general* principles, and thus by gentle steps, led themselves,
and

and the inexperienced reader, into a misapplication of *general principles* to *every individual case*. It is experience only that can shew whether any given *individual case* can or ought to be treated on the *general principle*; for as to certain *universal principles*, they cannot exist, respecting the science of farming, nor in any other science that I am acquainted with, unless it be of mathematics.

I REMEMBER being several years since, in company with some gentlemen who had gained considerable knowledge, either by reading or travelling. The subject of conversation was, the highest degree of cultivation this country could admit of; they all agreed in one *general principle*, that the greater quantities and more valuable product the ground in any country is made to yield, the more beneficial it is rendered to the nation at large—therefore as a good crop of corn is more valuable than a good crop of hay, the more ground is employed in tillage for corn, in preference to lying as meadow, the richer the country will be, and its comparative riches would be greater or less in proportion to the quantities produced of each grain, according to their respective value.—This general principle having been unanimously assented to,
—one

—one of the company, who had resided many years in the East, particularly in China, exclaimed, “Why, this being the case, I wonder “there is not an act of Parliament to oblige “every one to plough up his grass grounds, “and sow in future nothing but *wheat*.”—I observed, that I thought this was impracticable—He assured me I was mistaken, for that was actually the case in China. The Emperor forbids a blade of grass to grow in any part of his dominions; and the reason assigned in the edict for publishing this order was, *that ground where grass can grow will produce corn, if properly cultivated*, by which means the country of China was made to produce nourishment for three times as many inhabitants as any other spot on the globe of equal extent.—Now this oriental traveller reasoned upon good *general* principles; and the truth of his conclusion, respecting the mode of husbandry, he recommended to be adopted in England, if what he alledged respecting China be true, was confirmed by experience and fact. But though his conclusion was drawn from *just general* principles, and corroborated by facts, will any one say, that with respect to England, it was a *just conclusion*? Is there a person who knows the least of practical farming will say, that every
acre

acre of Salisbury-Plain, Newmarket, and Odsey Heaths, &c. every part of which commons produce a most beautiful turf, would by all the art and industry of man, considering the nature and situation of the soil, be capable of producing successive crops of wheat that would pay for the expence of tillage? If they would not, what is the inference? why, we may safely pronounce, without going to China, that the soil of that country is very different from ours.—This is a strong, though certainly a far-fetched instance, to prove that general principles, though just, cannot be properly applied to every particular case: but to keep my proofs nearer home I could adduce innumerable instances to shew that what was right for my neighbour to do with his land, which lay contiguous to mine, perhaps parted only by a hedge, would from various combinations of circumstances have been absolutely wrong for me to have followed; and so *vice versa* sometimes, in respect to his following a plan which had succeeded with me.

THE writer in question, I apprehend, comes under the predicament of having misapplied *good general* principles to *particular* cases, and herein he has erred in judgment, though honest in intention. Who Mr. Lamport is I know not,
but

but I will venture to pronounce, he is not a farmer of great experience.—As I venture to say what *he* is *not*, I will now tell the reader what *I am*.

ALTHOUGH I have had the advantage of a grammar education, and have travelled over a considerable portion of the Continent, as well as through the greatest part of England, for my amusement and information, and at the same time constantly retaining my favourite object, agriculture, in my mind; yet I have been accustomed to the farming business from my earliest age, and have had a farm in my own hands of near two hundred acres of arable and meadow land, for fourteen years past. And my neighbours do not consider me as a bad farmer, although I have never employed a bailiff to instruct or advise me how to act.

OBSER-

OBSERVATIONS

ON

Mr. LAMPOR T's REMARKS,

RESPECTING

The ENCLOSURES of WASTE-LANDS.

THE Reviewer, among other things says,
 “ the author, (viz. Mr. Lamport) ap-
 “ pears to be one of those few writers whose *zeal*
 “ and *knowledge* are equally *conspicuous*, he can-
 “ vasses all the parts of his subject with *spirit*
 “ and *candour*, approving and condemning as
 “ *reason* and *experience* shall direct his voice.”

How far Mr. Lamport deserves this praise, I
 will hereafter endeavour to shew.—In the mean
 time, I will frankly confess, that I think his
 humanity and patriotism cannot be too much
 commended, in saying, “ Since it has happened
 “ in the course of human events, that this na-
 “ tion does not possess so large an extent of
 “ territory as it lately did, ought it not to be
 “ among the *first* of our enquiries, whether the
 C “ lands

“ lands which it still possesses cannot be rendered more fertile, and capable of supplying the inhabitants of every description, particularly husbandmen and manufacturers, with sufficient food and employment; and lend aid towards paying the taxes, and lessening the load of the national debt?”

AND afterwards assures us, that “ Great-Britain may be compared to the land of *Canaan*, which was not in itself like *Egypt*, so fertile from the overflowing of the river Nile, as almost to supersede the necessity of industry and skill, nor yet so barren as to be a bar against it; but possessed that happy medium which animates the cultivator, by insuring a reward adequate to his exertions; that happy medium which finds continual employment for the labourer most conducive to health, population and prosperity.” And then illustrates his proposition by a quotation from Deuteronomy.

HAD I the least idea that the plan he proposes would effect the above laudable purposes, I should be one of the last men in England to throw a bar in the way of its execution.—But when he says, that by “ cultivating the surface,
“ and

“ and *raising as large a store of provisions as possible,*
 “ we may enable our manufacturers and artists
 “ to live comfortably on the allowed price of
 “ their labour, and thus proceed with spirit in
 “ their respective occupations, and that our
 “ commerce may extend its sails to the greatest
 “ distance, and foreign nations be prevented
 “ from underselling us”—*All* which he lays
 down as an axiom not to be controverted—I
 beg leave in some part to deny; for I cannot
 think the *raising as large a store of provisions as pos-*
sible, would, in *all cases, without exception*, be a
public benefit; on the contrary, I apprehend that
 it would in many cases be a very great injury to
 thousands of individuals, and very fatal in its
 effects, with regard to the nation at large; and
 consequently it would be an act of frenzy, or
 folly in the greatest degree to put it into execu-
 tion; and I apprehend the *universal* cultivation
 of the waste lands in Great Britain, would be
 so far from a benefit, that it would be the great-
 est evil to this country, which, in the course of
 nature or human art, could possibly befall it,
 except that of absolutely being swallowed up,
 and sunk into the bowels of the ocean.—Start
 not, reader, at this new and bold assertion; you
 will find that I have more reasons than you may
 imagine to support this extraordinary position—

Methinks I hear you say, is it possible to controvert so self-evident a proposition, as that the greater plenty we have of the necessaries of life, the greater benefit to the nation? No, I do not deny it as a *general*, but I deny it when meant as an *universal proposition*.—For I say that gold may be bought too dear, and so may corn, or grass, or any other of the useful productions of nature.—*Plenty* of the necessaries of life *abstractedly* considered, is not of so much benefit to a nation, as most people are apt to think—For it is only *when that plenty* causes a *cheapness* that enables every rank and degree of people to purchase a sufficiency for their subsistence, which constitutes it a general benefit to mankind: *Plenty* or *scarcity* of the articles of subsistence do not *ultimately* govern the price of a commodity, though it may tend to create a temporary rise or fall to a certain degree.—It is the *charge of the production*, that stamps the permanent averaged price on all kinds of commodities whatever.—For instance, no possible plenty of Dutch holland, or fine muslins of India, could ever cause those articles to alter for any length of time to an equal low price as the coarse doulas—because the manufactory of those fine articles is so infinitely more expensive than the coarse.—Admitting then that *the*
charge

charge of production stamps the *permanent averaged* price on all kinds of commodities, then I may fairly draw this conclusion; that though by a higher degree of cultivation of the lands in this country, we might be able to produce twice as much corn and grafs as we produce at present; yet, if that corn and grafs so produced should cost the nation, or the farmer who produced it, on account of the advanced rent of lands, and the exorbitant expences in the cultivation, twice as much per load as the price of those articles are at present, neither the nation nor the farmer would mend their condition by this encreased plenty; on the other hand the poor would suffer double the distresses they now suffer, unless their wages were doubled; and if their wages were doubled, this would effectually put a stop to all manufactures carried on at present to supply foreign markets.—Now, I do not believe, in case of a general enclosure, that corn would be much *dearer*, or even much *cheaper* than at present, notwithstanding the greater plenty; for as the price of corn is established in every country in Europe, from time to time, according to the averaged price, or plenty or scarcity in the different nations—should the cultivation of the waste lands be adopted, we should most probably produce

produce a great deal more corn than would be required for our home consumption ; and therefore we should send the overplus abroad ; and consequently the price *at home* would be the same as the merchant could sell it for *abroad*, deducting the charges of transportation.—But as a certain ancient book has said, *man does not live by bread alone*. There are other things to be taken into consideration respecting the sustenance of man, besides *corn*, namely *butcher's meat*, &c. and it is these articles which has given birth to my present pamphlet. And I here lay it down as an axiom which I shall endeavour to prove, that although the price of butcher's meat hath risen in London to double the price it might have been bought for thirty years ago ; yet should all the waste lands in Great Britain be parcelled out into farms, and let to tenants at high rents, in like manner as many waste lands in the kingdom have of late years been parcelled and let out, in a few years butcher's meat would be double in price to what it is at present ; that is to say, mutton and beef would be at 9d. or 10d. a pound at least, unless lean cattle should be imported from foreign countries. Because I am sure the grazier will not in that case be able to afford it for less. Therefore
 taking

taking for granted for a moment, that I am able to establish this assertion, the reader will, I doubt not, agree with me, that *the raising as large a store of provisions as possible, would not in all cases without exception be a national benefit*; for I believe no one will advance, that the additional exportation of corn would be an adequate compensation for so great an evil as that of doubling the present price of butcher's meat.

I AGREE with Mr. Lamport in many parts of his work; but I shall take notice only of such parts as I disapprove.—He says, p. 47. “ That
 “ history has informed us, that those countries
 “ which afford at first view no promising ap-
 “ pearances of fertility, in a state of nature
 “ where the inhabitants find some difficulty at
 “ first to gain a subsistence, and which require
 “ no small degree of labour in the manage-
 “ ment of the soil, prove in time the most po-
 “ pulous, are most blessed with fruitful au-
 “ tumns, abound most in cattle, and all the
 “ real comforts of life, and in every respect
 “ become the most flourishing and powerful.”

I READILY admit what he here says in part to be true, but what does it prove in support of his general argument? although the superior skill and
 industry

industry of the inhabitants of a country where the soil is naturally poor, may sometimes triumph over the inhabitants of another where the soil is naturally more fertile; does that prove that every poor or barren soil to be found in this or other countries, can be brought to yield equal compensation for labour, as those soils which are naturally rich and fertile? Mr. Lamport makes but two sorts of soils, namely, those which are naturally rich and fertile, and those which are by nature poor or barren.—He should consider that there are *many degrees* of *fertility* or *barrenness*.—I have been in countries where barely harrowing in the seed was the only cultivation required to produce the most immense crops; and as to manure, should any have been laid thereon, the corn would have been so rank as to have rotted before it was ripe. On the other hand, there are degrees of poverty; for instance, some soils naturally poor pay well for cultivation; there are others which after much labour yield a scanty crop, not equal in value to the expence of raising it; there is a sort of poor soil, of which there are millions of acres in this kingdom which would be much less beneficial to the nation, when cultivated by the best practical mode that could be devised, than they are in their present uncultivated state, and these

these different sorts, I mean hereafter to explain more fully. I cannot altogether agree with Mr. Lamport, when he says, that “ *Every single acre of uncultivated ground is a real physical evil to any state;*” For I can mention many hundred thousand acres of waste lands in this kingdom, and which probably have been so from the beginning of time, which have been and still continue to be a *great physical good*, and much more so than if they were cultivated in the best manner possible.—But Mr. Lamport having, as he thinks, established his doctrine on a basis not to be shaken, he triumphantly says, “ For my own part, I would rather undertake the cultivation of those lands which have not had a furrow made in them for a century past, than be tormented with such as are filled with weeds from a long continued mismanagement.”—So would I also certainly prefer them, provided both were equally good in nature; but *I think*, and I should not be accused of presumption by an intelligent farmer were I to assert, that I am *certain* I can purge any land from *weeds* much sooner, and with much less expence, than I can make *poor* land *rich*.—Mr. Lamport further says, “ That concerning England, it is asserted, that it originally produced nothing but flocks; and William of Malmesbury thus writes of the

D

“ soil

“ foil around the city of Exeter; *the ground about*
 “ *is wet and filthy, and will scarce bear a crop of bad*
 “ *oats, often yielding empty ears without grain.*”—

After which comes the following apostrophe.—

“ What will not improvements effect on bad
 “ soils, when most of the ground which envi-
 “ rons that city would now rent at thirty shil-
 “ lings an acre, even were each acre at the di-
 “ stance of ten miles from any considerable mar-
 “ ket-town !”—Could any man of candour and

knowledge in agriculture mislead his reader by such a false conclusion from Malmesbury's account of the ancient state of the lands near Exeter? Had I not a good opinion of Mr. Lamport's intentions, I should have considered this apostrophe to be one of the completest pieces of sophistry to deceive the ignorant and unwary, ever practised. However it can deceive only the *ignorant* and *unwary*; for every person who knows any thing of farming, would understand this ancient writer's expression of *wet and filthy*, to mean no more than that it was a *marshy soil, and wanted draining*, in the same manner as the Isle of Dogs, and many other lands on the banks of large rivers formerly did, and which every farmer knows to be, when properly drained, the most productive meadow ground in this kingdom; therefore can it reasonably, or
 with

with any degree of probability be supposed, that this ancient authority of William of Malmesbury, could tend to insinuate a suggestion to an intelligent farmer, that all the waste lands now in England, which *chiefly* consist of either stiff clays, with little or no staple of mould to produce a profitable vegetation; or of absolute sands, where no verdure but heath can grow; or of chalky soils, where there is only a thin carpet of turf to cover the hard barren rock, can by any possible means of cultivation, be made to equal those marshy grounds when properly drained?—I only ask the question—let the reader judge. He further says,

“ Agriculture, as to the particular part of it,
 “ is as yet but in its infancy. However, from
 “ the *laudable exertions lately made on our wastes*,
 “ one may venture to assert that there is scarce
 “ an acre of ground, *if not perfectly barren by na-*
 “ *ture or situation*, which may not be brought
 “ amply to repay the improver, either by drain-
 “ ing, tillage, or planting; *provided the expences*
 “ *attending the cultivation do not exceed the natural*
 “ *powers of the soil, and its internal capacity of*
 “ *production.*”—Very well Mr. Lamport! as
 Touchstone says, there are great virtues in an
if.—Your *if* and your *proviso* stand you in good

stead in this place ; for I will venture to assert, there are *many millions* of acres in this country, whose nature requires them to be classed under those falvoes *.

He afterwards says (page 49) “ If the lands “ be let on an improving lease.”——I expected a natural inference to follow this hypothesis, *which might tend* to corroborate his opinion——instead of which he immediately tells us, “ That this last circumstance was the grand “ secret of the Flemish husbandry:”—and without giving his reader any further information, transports him *to the bleak and rocky hills of Scotland.*

* THIS is a palpable instance of the absurdity of writing in a style not usually adopted on the subject ; the writer is enveloped in error by his *copious* language, and the ignorant or indolent reader is also misled,—reduce the foregoing quotation from Mr. Lamport into *good Saxon English*, and it will appear to say nothing at all—and I could give Mr. Lamport many instances of waste lands which have been inclosed in this country of late years, which have not yet, nor have the prospect of ever paying the expence of enclosure ; and what is still more unfortunate, not only the encloser has suffered in respect to his private property, but the nation at large, on account of the land being of less general benefit than formerly.

I REJECT

I REJECT the idea, as illiberal, of cavilling at the language of a writer on farming, provided he conveys good sense, but I confess this paragraph is to me unintelligible. — But, as Mr. Lamport appears to have an honest intention, however obscure his expressions, I will give him credit for *some meaning* in this passage, and therefore I will hazard a conjecture what that meaning might be.—And I am inclined to suppose, that his design in hinting at the grand secret of the Flemish husbandry (and which idea he takes from his author Mr *Harte*) was to insinuate, that they cultivated every inch of ground in their country with great industry and success, and thereby produced great profit to themselves and their country, and therefore wishes us to follow their example.

I AM the more inclined to believe this to be his idea, because, having been myself in Flanders, that circumstance is certainly true, with respect to great part of that country; it being cultivated with the most assiduous attention, beyond any other I ever travelled through.—But still I would wish to inform Mr. Lamport, and my reader, that there is a great part even of Flanders, which the industrious Fleming has never attempted to cultivate :—for instance, a tract

tract of country which I have passed over from Dunkirk to Calais, yet remains a barren uncultivated sand for several leagues distant from the sea shore : and the same may be said of the eastern extremities, which are bounded by uncultivated mountains, and barren rocks.

I WILL not enter into the accuracy of Mr. Lamport's estimates, respecting the number of acres in England * ; nor of the averaged rent per acre of such part as is cultivated † ; nor of the number of acres now under cultivation, either in meadow, pasture, or arable ‡ ; nor should I have had any objection to his stating, that twenty millions of acres were employed, for houses, gardens, parks, *lawns*, rivers, *swamps*, roads, and *barren spots*, had I not supposed he was somewhat inaccurate in not considering that *lawns*, *swamps*, and *barren spots*, are either subject to a rent, or are esteemed as *waste lands*, for people seldom occupy them, either for pleasure or convenience, unless included as part of their *parks*. Therefore, I must consider, that he has over-rated the lands occupied, and not tenanted

* SEVENTY-TWO millions of acres.

† ELEVEN shillings and four-pence.

‡ THIRTY-SIX millions.

by farmers; consequently, I think he has calculated this part of the lands of England much too high. Now, supposing his other calculations to be just, it is reasonable to imagine we have twenty millions of acres of waste or uncultivated land in England, though he calculates them at no more than sixteen millions. Admitting then his premises to be well-founded, I have greatly encreased the supposed gain by his own plan.

BUT he observes, it is supposed “ That the
 “ rental of the estates in cultivation would not
 “ amount to any thing like twenty millions of
 “ money were it not for the right of common
 “ annexed to many of them in the lease, so
 “ that in reality the farmers do pay rent for the
 “ waste lands,” which he thinks “ *to be a*
 “ *detriment to them*, and a still much greater evil
 “ *to the nation.*”—And which he thus exemplifies :

“ THE cultivated lands are supposed to produce three rentals, or sixty millions.—If the
 “ whole land may be brought to produce one-fifth more, the rental to the land owners will
 “ then amount to twenty-four millions, and
 “ the produce to the *nation* at three rentals *to the*
 “ *additional sum of twelve millions.*”

BUT

But he says " The advantages do not rest
 " here : the farmers will not only be enabled to
 " keep a greater number of cattle ; but raise
 " each of those they rear to a size almost
 " double to what is at present effected by keep-
 " ing them almost starving, especially the two
 " first years, on heaths and commons : for
 " when once impeded in their free and regular
 " growth, from want of a sufficient quantity of
 " wholesome food, they will never recover their
 " proper size, tho' fed afterwards on the strong-
 " est lands. Young stock kept on turnips in
 " cold months till they are two years old, scarce
 " know their having passed through a couple of
 " winters. By a sufficiency of nourishing food,
 " with an agreeable variety, the lands on which
 " they are kept will be insensibly improving,
 " the cattle will be less liable to disorders, and
 " throw off at their death hides and skins, to
 " say nothing of the tallow, of a far superior
 " quality as well as size ; requiring less expence
 " likewise in the dressing of them. They will,
 " in every respect, yield the greatest clear profit
 " to the farmer who rears them, to the grazier
 " who fattens them, to the butcher, the tanner,
 " and in fact to the whole community : for
 " while young they must grow in some parts of
 " the body or other ; if kept half starved, they
 " will

“ will grow unshapely ; and it is a maxim
 “ among graziers, that the handsomer the
 “ cattle the quicker they fatten.” And he
 concludes his remarks with this observation,
 “ That from these and other circumstances, I
 “ am satisfied as to a question, concerning which
 “ I was for a long time in doubt, whether the
 “ farmers themselves ever gained a shilling a
 “ year clear profit by their supposed advan-
 “ tageous right of common ? For, as I observ-
 “ ed before, the rents of their estates are raised
 “ on this account, and therefore *the kingdom has*
 “ *been a considerable loser by the waste, as it is justly*
 “ *stiled in every sense of the word.*”

THE preceding quotation appears to contain
 a considerable share of *good sense, knowledge, and*
falacious argument ; and such a mixture is not
 so much to be wondered at in a book of farm-
 ing, supposing it to be written by a person who
 derives the greatest part of his experimental
 knowledge from the limited circle of his own
 neighbourhood, because merely *local* knowledge
 is very incompetent to form a *general* system of
 farming : with respect to the given spot he may
 judge truly ; but when he speaks of the king-
 dom at large, he inevitably betrays his ignorance.
 For I repeat what I have before hinted, that it

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may

may as well be imagined that there may be invented from the *materia medica*, a specific remedy against every disorder to which mankind are liable, without distinction of age, sex, constitution, &c. as to be able to fix upon one specific plan of husbandry, suitable to every soil in Great Britain.—For though a mathematician may truly say, give me two angles of a triangle, and I am certain of truly describing the third angle.—Yet farming not being a mathematical science, there are but few deductions in regard to it drawn from experience merely in one given spot, which *must necessarily* be true respecting others.”

THEREFORE this reverie of Mr. Lamport puts me in mind of the lad in the Arabian Tales, who dreamed of the vast riches he was to acquire, by the basket of eggs which lay under his feet. However, I make no doubt, but many of his readers, particularly those of a lethargic disposition, will fall into his visionary and romantic ideas ; and as a pleasant dream is *quamdiu* a pleasant thing, I would wish my reader to sink into this pleasing reverie for a while, and take it for granted :

FIRST,

FIRST, That the farmers do actually pay more rents for the waste lands, than the benefits they receive from them are worth ; and consequently should those lands be enclosed, even the farmer himself would be a gainer, rather than a loser by the bargain : That being admitted, then,

SECONDLY, If all the waste lands in England (which Mr. Lamport states at about one-fifth of the whole) were cultivated, they would produce *twelve millions* sterling more than the present produce ; and we are assured of this being a fact, by Mr. Lamport, who has very emphatically affirmed, “ *that if they will not produce that, they will produce nothing.*”

SHOULD these circumstances appear upon examination to be true, what an amazing discovery is here made !—No less than an additional annual gain of *twelve millions*.—More than three times as much as his most catholic Majesty receives annually from his mines of Mexico and Peru ; and more than five times as much as the most sanguine encouragers of our Asiatic commerce have calculated the benefits hereafter to be derived from our connections in India.

READER, pause here a while, and survey this rich and extended prospect,—does it not disperse all the cloudy vapours which have hung on your mind, since the accursed American war?—See *the land of Canaan* before you, which shall compensate for all the expences, losses and disappointments which this nation has experienced of late.—What is the late encreased debt of upwards of one hundred millions sterling, or the annual encreased interest on the same, amounting to between three and four millions per annum? Why it is no more than a mortgage, upon the new discovered wealth, of about one-third of its value.—Methinks I hear my reader glowing with patriotic zeal and ardour, exclaim in the language of *Quidnunc*, in the Upholsterer—*How are we ruined?*

IF thou seekest thine own happiness, reader, thou wilt lay my book aside, and read no more at present—lest, peradventure, my barbarous pen, even as thou hast seen an house painter's brush destroy a beautiful fresco painting on a wall, should deface and spoil this charming prospect.

I HAVE for many years past laid it down in my mind as a truth, that agriculture is the parent

rent of industry and wealth. A well conducted system of *farming* is the only root from whence can spring a lasting wealth, power, and happiness to this nation. For though commerce may for a time produce *wealth*, yet it *inevitably at the same time will produce luxury*. Trade, manufactures, and commerce should therefore be treated only as *the hand-maids or servants to agriculture*. Whenever the *farming* interest shall be considered by the legislature as *subservient* to the *trading* interest, *this nation from that moment is tending towards decline*.—First, in respect to power and happiness, and afterwards in respect to wealth. Therefore, in such case I consider this country in the same situation as a rich widow with a large family, marrying a prodigal servant to the ruin of herself and her children.

I HAVE so much enthusiastic zeal for my country's good, that I laboured a considerable time to establish in my mind the truth of Mr. Lamport's positions:—but alas! I soon found that his picture was drawn from imagination, and not from nature.—And as deceptions have for some time been injurious, I thus warn my countrymen; some of them may not, perhaps, wish to be undeceived. *Qui vult decepti, decipiat.*

I SHALL

I SHALL therefore now examine with all possible candour, consistently with truth, 1st. Whether the farmers do actually at this time pay for the lands now lying waste, more rent than the benefits they receive therefrom are worth; and whether, should all those lands be enclosed, *be (the farmer)* as well as the nation at large would be gainers rather than losers by the measure.—2dly. Admitting that to be the case, whether the waste lands in this country, if inclosed, would probably produce a clear profit to the nation of twelve millions sterling, per annum, more than at present, which Mr. Lamport has asserted.

I do not mean to prove any thing by *mere argumentation*, therefore I shall in general content myself with stating *facts*.—However, I beg leave to remind the reader, that, if the farmers do really pay such a great rent for their present waste lands, it is at least of some benefit; and I think Mr. Lamport has too much equity to deny, that should they be deprived of that use and benefit, however small it may be, by enclosing the wastes, the farmer ought to have a compensation equal to the real benefit he now actually enjoys. And who can equitably determine the precise advantage every individual
farmer

farmer may receive therefrom?—But admitting that this might be equitably determined, out of what fund is it to come?—I am afraid it must somehow or other be a deduction from Mr. Lamport's twelve millions.

MR. LAMPORT has not only 'forgot to state this circumstance; but I apprehend he has also declared *the thing that is not*. For I will venture to assert, that the generality of those who receive a benefit from the herbage of waste lands, do *not*, one with another, pay an increased rent on account of such benefit, of *one half*, nay, I may venture to say, not *one third* of the value of the benefits they now enjoy thereby; but admitting for a moment that it is *a third and no more*;—then, in that case they, upon a deprivation of those benefits have an equitable claim as compensation to three times as much as they now pay for the same, which would make a still larger deduction from Mr. Lamport's twelve millions.

MR. LAMPORT must also allow that what the farmers gain from the waste lands, is also a gain to the nation at large.

BUT

BUT as I would not have the reader adopt an opinion of mine till corroborated by facts: I would have him take for granted, the facts I have adduced *only*, till such time as he can, more to his satisfaction, inform himself.—I will now set forth the facts which induce me to apprehend, that not one third of the benefit arising from waste lands, is at present paid as an encreased rent on that account.

MR. LAMPORT shews that he is not wholly unacquainted with the proper method of rearing cattle, when he says, “ *That those cattle are much superior in point of size, quality, and shape; and in every other respect, which are duly fed with wholesome food in winter, than those who for their first two winters are almost starving on heaths and commons.*” And indeed such people as are not in any wise conversant in farming may naturally suppose this observation to be just.—But, however, be that as it may, I am very certain, I never yet conversed with a farmer who was not of that opinion, and for which reason it is almost their invariable custom to take their cattle home in the winter, and feed them in their own pastures or yards, if they have the possible means of doing it, and he that should act otherwise in any country,
with

with which I am conversant, would be called a fool or a madman : but one of the principal advantages arising to a farmer from a neighbouring common is, that as the herbage his cattle receive on the common during the summer months, supports them in equal good health, tho' perhaps they are not so fat as if they were always kept on his own grounds ; as soon as the grass begins to shoot in the spring, he can send *all* his cattle to the common till after mowing ; by which means he has all his first grass crops in barns or stacks, instead of a great part of it being eaten off by his own live stock. This surely is so far from being a detriment to the farmer, that it is an essential benefit.

LET us consider what he pays for enjoying this benefit :—Mr. Lamport says more than it is worth :—My farm is situated on the confines of two large parishes, each of which have commons belonging to them, from 1500 to 2000 acres ; on both of which commons, I as well as many other farmers in my neighbourhood, have an unlimited right of commonage, and though we are not bound by any manerial or parochial restrictions to any particular quantity or number of cattle respectively, our own pru-

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dence

dence governs and restrains us on that head; we do not stock ourselves with more cattle in the summer to feed on the commons, than we can properly keep at home in the winter.

Now what do my neighbours pay to their landlords for this benefit?—Nothing stipulated or fixed,—the tenant previous to his agreement for the farm, surveys each field, and estimates what each is worth per acre to the best of his judgment, and if he thinks the land is worth per acre what it is set at, he takes the farm without any additional rent to be paid for the commonage.—It is only an inticement to the farmer to prefer that farm to another of the same rent and quality, which has not those advantages.—And those advantages to a farmer depend so much on his own skill, good conduct, and success, that I never knew a farm of (for instance) 100 acres of ground valued at 6d. per acre the more for having such advantage.—But Mr. Lamport says, that the farmers do actually at this time pay more rent for the lands now lying waste, than the benefits they receive therefrom amount to.—Either the facts *he* founds his opinion on, or the facts *I* have stated, are false; let the reader enquire into this matter and form his opinion accordingly.

WHEN

WHEN I suppose there is little or no stipulated rent paid, *in general*, by farmers for the right of commonage on waste land: I mean such right as is enjoyed by him in common with the rest of the inhabitants of the parish; however when specific farms have exclusive right to particular waste, I have known considerable annual rent given for the same. And it is also to be observed, that in many parishes each inhabitant pays a stipulated sum every year to the lord of the manor, of four-pence, or six-pence per beast, more or less, for the right of common, which is usually paid at branding time.

BUT in order that the reader may follow me in my reasoning with more precision and certainty, I beg leave to set forth to him, other classes of people living near great commons, besides farmers, who derive very essential advantages from their right of common; namely, the cottager, the mechanic, and inferior shopkeepers; but more particularly the cottagers, who in general are labourers to the farmers; this common-right is an incitement to industry, and also an encouragement to the young men and women to intermarry, and is the means of supporting their children with credit and comfort, and of course renders them very valuable

members of society. — The children of these cottagers brought up under an industrious father and mother, are sent to yearly service amongst farmers, &c. and if in the course of a few years service, the young man can scrape up 20l. or 30l. and finds a young woman that he likes, possessed with nearly an equal sum, they strike a bargain and agree to marry as soon as they can find a cottage near the common; they then stock their cottage with cows, calves, sheep, hogs, poultry, &c. as much as their little fortunes will admit of. He then hires himself as a day labourer to a neighbouring farmer, and the wife stays at home to look after the live stock. I could mention many cottagers in my neighbourhood under this predicament, who keep two or three milch cows, two or three calves a rearing, forty or fifty sheep, two or three hogs, and poultry consisting of chickens, ducks, geese and turkies, to the amount in number of fifty to one hundred in a year, according as they may have had success. — And what do these cottagers pay for all those advantages? Why nothing but the rent for his cottage, his orchard, his piece of meadow ground, of perhaps one, two or three acres, more or less, viz.

For

For his house, garden, and orchard,			
per annum.	-	-	4 4 0
His three acres of ground, at 30s	-		4 10 0
			8 14 0
Deduct for the apples and other			
fruit he sells out of his orchard one			
year with another	-	-	3 3 0
Total annual rent for house, garden,			
orchard, (exclusive of fruit fold)			
three acres of ground and un-			
limited right of commonage	-		5 11 0

As the reader may wish to know how he maintains his cattle in winter, I will inform him.—Some out of an imprudent covetousness, let their sheep, for instance, take their chance on the common during the winter, by which conduct they frequently lose many; but in that loss they comfort themselves with thinking, that if they don't get much by their sheep, the sheep cost them nothing. Others more provident send their sheep to board with farmers, who have more lands than sufficient to keep their own live stock, at the rate of 2s.—2s. 6d. or 3s. per score per week, during the severe winter months; at which prices I take them, according as they may be, lambs, wethers, or ewes;

ewes; and part of each Sunday during that time is employed by the cottagers in a visit to their sheep; by which means their sheep are as well taken care of in the winter as the farmer's are, and the expence of wintering them in this manner is amply repaid by the condition they find their flock in, the ensuing spring. As to their cows during the winter, the hay produced by their meadow ground serves for their support: by this means I have known instances of the wife's management of the live stock, together with the earnings of herself and her children in hay time, and harvest, &c. produce nearly as much money in the course of the year, as her husband by all his labour during the same time. I will moreover venture to pronounce the greatest part of the live stock, viz. of cows, sheep, hogs, poultry, &c. seen upon the commons in general, in my neighbourhood, which are very numerous and extensive, are the property of cottagers; because, as I before observed, it is during a small part of the year, namely, from the time the grass begins to shoot to the mowing time, that farmers in general make any great use of commons.—However, if Mr. Lamport's assertions are to be credited in preference to the facts I have laid down, let the legislature agree with him, that the
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commons in their present state are *perfectly useless*, and are properly *stiled wastes in every sense of the word*. In the mean time, I do not accuse Mr. Lamport of singularity in his assertions. For I know many people in my own neighbourhood, who consider themselves as men of enlarged understandings, tho', by the bye, they are not farmers, who will assert, that commons are productive of *much evil*, and *no good*; yet if they would but give themselves the trouble to examine into the system of œconomy of hundreds of cottagers in their own neighbourhood, they could make themselves certain with regard to the truth of the facts I have above stated.

SHOULD my reader say, that tho' what I have described respecting the cottagers who live in my neighbourhood be true, yet it is not so in *general*.—I answer, that if it is not in general true respecting all commons, I am persuaded it is owing to the cottagers not having the same advantages.—I know the disposition of a clown too well to doubt his conduct being the same, wherever he has the same opportunities. I cannot think that (however at present he may be despised) he is divested of common sense, and common feelings; and the common feelings will direct him to provide himself a comfortable
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subſiſtence in his old age; and alſo a ſubſiſtence for his children after him, provided there be a means of ſo doing; and ſhould my opinions be objected to, I would aſk, is there a cottage empty under the circumſtances which I have deſcribed?—I know of none;—but I know many labouring huſbandmen who are impatiently waiting for them.

BUT it has been the faſhion for many years paſt to deſtroy the cottages in the neighbourhood of commons, on the pretence of their being injurious to the public, and ſerving only to harbour thieves, &c. And tho' this may be ſometimes the caſe, it is by no means general; and when frequent, I attribute the abuſe more to the bad magiſtracy in the neighbourhood, than as an evil *naturally* ariſing from ſuch detached cottages.—The real fact is, that the great farmers diſlike them, becauſe they conſider them as infringements of their own rights of common; and I know many farmers who for that reaſon will not employ any cottager who is poſſeſſed of any kind of beaſt, altho' he may have a juſt right and conveniency to keep them.—This added to the trouble they give to many ſtewards of eſtates, who finding that the repairs and collecting the rents of cottages create much trouble,
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are very ready to give way to the wishes of the farmer, and are reasons among several others which might be assigned why we see very few new cottages erected on commons, and many daily tumbling to ruin for want of repair.

WHAT I have above said respecting cottages and cottagers, I apprehend will suffice with regard to the present question; however I mean to treat this subject hereafter more at large.

THE waste lands which I have hitherto had in view, have been chiefly such as his Majesty's forests, and chases, and commons belonging to parishes, whose soils will admit of food for cows, horses, &c. and are interspersed with wood-lands and cottages. I will now make a few observations on such commons as come under a different description, viz. such as are on a chalk rocky soil, of which nature there are many very extensive ones; for instance, Salisbury-Plain, Newmarket-Heath, Odsey-Heath, &c. On these you see few or no cottages, and, as to trees, the soil is incapable of producing them.—The benefit of these commons is confined merely to the farmer, without contributing scarce any benefit to the *cottager*; but then to the neighbouring *farmers* the benefit

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is very great. On these commons they keep large breeding flocks of sheep, no other beast being able to live upon them, and they fold those sheep on their corn lands every night in the summer months, and hence arise three very essential benefits to the farmer, and of course to the public; namely, a large supply of lean stock for the rich pasture lands, which are not so proper for the breeding as for fattening of cattle, 2dly. an immense production of wool of the fine sort fit for clothiers, and which the enclosed improved lands cannot produce of equal good quality. 3dly. By folding the neighbouring arable lands with the sheep, subsisted by those commons and thereby obtain good crops of turnips and corn, and in respect to the greatest part of these lands, these are the only possible means of rendering them worth cultivating. Should any one say, that there are possible means of rendering those heaths more profitable by any mode of cultivation whatever, I apprehend he would talk without experience or judgment.—I can speak from my own observation, that the natural turf of those commons, which consists of about two or three inches in thickness, forming a beautiful carpet to cover the chalky rock, being once destroyed is irretrievably lost for ever. There are many instances

instances upon those heaths where the marks of the plow may be traced tho' plowed so long since that tradition cannot say when : however, by these traces we are certain the experiment hath already been tried, and found not to answer ;—and moreover, time has shewn, that the new turf, which hath taken place after it hath been plowed, is vastly inferior in point of herbage and every other respect to the natural turf. I know some of these encroachments on the heaths I have mentioned, still remaining as farms, but which are considered to be less profitable per acre than the uncultivated heath.—I have, for instance, in my eye, a farm of this sort not forty miles from London, at the extremity of one of those heaths, which consists of near 1000 acres of enclosed ground, together with the right of commonage on the heath, with an excellent house and homestead, &c. which lay untenanted several years, though the rent thereof does not exceed eighteen-pence per acre ; and I have also known several tenants quit it because they could not get a living there.—With respect to the commons which are an absolute sand, and which produce scarce any thing but heath, wild thyme, &c. they afford very little sustenance even for sheep. Such, for instance as Esher and Cobham commons, and part

of Windsor Forest, Bagshot Heath, &c. If upon a survey there should be found at an easy distance, marl or other stiff earth to mix with the sand, it would probably be a public benefit if they were enclosed and cultivated; and I know no man's opinion I would consult on the subject so soon, as a farmer who has long resided in the neighbourhood of the above-mentioned commons, who has practised that mode of improvement for many years with great success, and who I apprehend possesses more real knowledge of practical farming, than all the writers on farming who have published books thereon, in my time. — Those parts of such commons which are now in a manner wholly barren, and where such stiff earth could not be found at a convenient distance, might certainly be improved by planting of firs or other trees, which can grow in an absolute sand, or they might be turned into rabbit warrens. — These are the only modes that suggest themselves to me of rendering the last-mentioned waste lands more useful than they are now. However at present they are far from being useless; the sheep pick up some sustenance there, and the heath or turf is a great relief to the poor where other firing is dear.

BUT

if Agriculture is, (as it is said to be,) the Parent
of Industry & Wealth—how greatly have
we discouraged industry, & squandered Wealth
by discouraging small farming. —

BUT to return to the general consideration of waste lands, by examination of a great part of the lands of England, I have drawn a further conclusion; namely, tho' the people of the present age consider themselves so much more enlightened than their ancestors were; and it must be confessed, we have made many very essential improvements in farming of late years, yet our ancestors certainly knew good land from bad, by the choice they made in general of what should be cultivated, and what should be left as waste; for the wastes, excepting some few instances, bear no comparison in point of *natural* quality with those which are at present in a state of cultivation; and therefore, admitting it might be proper to cultivate all the waste lands, Mr. Lamport's calculation is much too high, when he supposes that our present waste lands, when properly cultivated, would yield nearly as much produce per acre, on an average, as the present cultivated grounds.

BUT there would be another disadvantage arising from enclosing all the commons or waste lands, which has entirely escaped the observation of Mr. Lamport, and which I look on as greater evil than any I have yet mentioned; namely, that it would tend greatly to enhance
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the price of butchers meat. I have no doubt that should the farmers and cottagers throughout Great Britain, be deprived of their rights of commonage on waste lands, that beef and mutton at proper age, viz. four years old, would soon be near a shilling a pound, unless lean stock should be imported from foreign countries. Should this be the case, it would totally defeat one of the great objects of Mr. Lamport's plan; namely, that of *providing sustenance to our manufacturers, &c. at a cheap rate, in order that we may undersel other nations who are our rivals in trade at foreign markets*, and which I mean to illustrate in the ensuing chapter.

Observa-

*Observations on the Causes of the
present high Price of Butchers
Meat.*

IT is generally estimated by farmers, that one acre of tolerable good pasture ground, will scarcely afford sustenance throughout the year for five sheep of such a size as are usually bred on the best commons, viz. weighing when fat, from fifty to sixty pounds, or about seven stone London weight.—Now, I believe, if Mr. Lamport knows the price of tolerable good pasture ground in general, he will allow very little is let for less than twenty shillings per acre in even the cheapest parts of England; indeed in many parts scarce any is let for so low a price. But I will make my estimate on the supposition, that such pasture is let at that rate, and if it should appear that it lets in general at a higher price, my argument will have greater weight.

IF it let for twenty shillings per acre, let us examine at what price the farmers could afford his wether of the size above described,
viz.

viz. full mouthed, or four years old, which is the age to which mutton ought to be kept in order to be in perfection, if bred and constantly kept on such land, the farmer not having the means of laying in lean stock from commons? I will answer this question by making a comparison of his expences in rearing and keeping the said wether in that manner, and the expences of the cottager, who has the advantage of a common.

Farmers expences.

Five ewes producing five wether lambs				
cost keeping the produce of one				
acre of ground, and for which				
he pays to his landlord, per ann.		1	0	0
On account of parish rates, tythes, &c.				
one fifth more		-	0	4 0
Cost of lambs the first year	-	-	1	4 0
Ditto	second year	-	1	4 0
Ditto	third year	-	1	4 0
Ditto	fourth year	-	1	4 0
Gross costs of keeping the said five				
lambs till they become wethers of				
four years old		-	4	16 0
Whence must be deducted the profits on				
the wool that the five ewes produced				
				the

the first year, and the wool of the five
wethers the three succeeding years;
which I estimate at two todd of
wool, viz. half a todd a year, and at
twenty shillings a todd amounts to

2 0 0

Nett costs - - 2 16 0

Add one-fourth of gross costs for

loss by rot or accident - - 1 4 0

Ditto one-fourth for profit on labour

and attention - - 1 4 0

That is about nearly one guinea per
head - - - 5 4 0

IN order to make it appear that I do not wish
to strain the estimate for the sake of making
good my argument, I have charged nothing
for the keep of the lambs the first year, though
certainly the ground must be very good that
will keep five ewes and five lambs the whole
year round.—But as the farmer may save his
pasture ground a little by letting his sheep some-
times run on his fallow ground, if he happens
to have any arable land belonging to his farm,
I chuse not to swell the estimate higher than
above stated.

Cottagers expences.

Five ewes producing five wether lambs kept by a cottager on a common, and boarded at a farm sixteen weeks in the winter, at three-pence a head per week	-	1	0	0
* Expences of boarding the wether for sixteen weeks, at two-pence per week, per head, is for the second winter	-	0	13	4
Ditto for the third winter	-	0	13	4
Ditto for the fourth winter	-	0	13	4
		3	0	0
Whence to be deducted the wool as in the case of the farmer	-	2	0	0
Net cost	-	1	0	0
Add to the net cost one-fourth of the gross cost, for loss by rot, and other accidents	-	0	15	0
Ditto for profit on labour and attention	-	0	15	0
		2	10	0

Or ten shillings a head.

* THIS is the price at which I take the cottagers flocks into my grounds every winter.

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THAT is to say, allowing for profits and risques in both cases in the same proportion according to property risked; the farmer's wethers at four years old would stand him in one guinea a piece, and the cottager's ten shillings a piece, which makes good my former assertion.

SINCE making the above calculation, I have consulted with some of the farmers in my neighbourhood, respecting the quantity of sheep on a given quantity of pasture land, under the beforementioned description, and I do not find any of them are willing to allow that such ground will maintain above four wethers per acre the whole year round.

SUPPOSING a comparison be made on wethers to be sold at two years old instead of four years old, the difference in price would not be so great; but then it is to be considered, that killing all the wethers at two years, instead of four years old, would not only deprive our tables of good mutton, but would occasion one-third less produce of wool per annum throughout the kingdom, than if kept to a proper age: viz. four years old, and I leave to

the reader to suppose what this immense loss would amount to annually.

HOWEVER it must be observed, that it is true the losses the cottager is liable to by his sheep being in more danger of being stolen or strayed, is greater than the farmer's which are kept in enclosures near his own home; but then on the other hand, the cottager's sheep by being always able to shift their ground from hill to valley, &c. on the common, at pleasure, as they may find occasion, are not so liable to rot as those kept in enclosures.

THEREFORE admitting my calculation to be a just one, which I sincerely believe it nearly to be, the comparison stands thus: the wether weighs when lean, forty pounds, when fat sixty pounds.

If the grazier buys of the cottager a wether of four years old, weighing, when lean, forty pounds, it can be afforded, allowing for reasonable risks and profits, at ten shillings, or three-pence per pound.

BUT if he buys it of the farmer reared as above stated, it cannot be afforded, making the
same

same proportional allowance for risques and profits, under one guinea, or upwards of six-pence a pound.

BESIDES, there is a circumstance so universally known and acknowledged, that it may be deemed an axiom, that sheep are of a very roving nature, and never thrive in a long state of confinement, however good the pasture may be; and so fond are they of change, that they will frequently quit a good pasture for a bad one: consequently, if there were no commons for the farmers to turn their sheep upon in the spring, when their grounds are shut up to secure the summer crop, they would not be able to keep any thing like the quantity of sheep in the summer, which they could very well maintain during the winter months.—This is verified by innumerable instances which I could produce of such farmers who have no commons to turn their sheep on; for they keep very few sheep in many parts; perhaps a few to *fatten*, but no *breeding stock* at all. And their lands in winter are stocked with sheep from the commons of the neighbouring parishes, as I have above stated at two-pence, or three-pence a head, per week. — In this instance may be seen the wisdom of our forefathers, by reserving in almost every

every parish a considerable quantity of waste lands, which their descendants, though more wise in some respects, are framing acts of parliament every year to destroy.

BUT the wisdom of our ancestors consisted in following the order of universal nature, which delights in diversity, in all her works ; and thence arises that beautiful harmony throughout the whole : while we, their posterity, are so refined, that we are not contented with our improvements till we have outstepped the bounds of nature. Were I writing a moral treatise, I could plainly make it appear, that this is the case in general in respect to the gratification of sensual appetites of every species in the present times.

I HAVE endeavoured to prove my position, that if all the commons in Great Britain were enclosed, good mutton and beef would be twice as dear as it now is, by a calculation on the article of sheep only ; and it is merely on account of brevity, that I do not make the same calculation on oxen : as any one who is conversant in cattle must know, that with very little variation the same might be made on beef, with equal truth and propriety.—But that I may not
appear

The enclosure of Commons must
increase the price of Butcher's Meat
and the reason is obvious:

Because young Stock for the three first
years, live nine months out of twelve
on the Common of Waste Land, previous
to their being taken up to fat: so that the
Grazier can certainly send them to Market
much cheaper than if they had always
been fed on land of twenty or thirty
shillings an acre.

inserted in public Advertiser Thursday
Oct 6. 1789

page. 63. Beef & Mutton is at double price compared
near thirty years ago — the best pieces of Beef at 9. 6. 3/4
p. Lib! Mutton 2. 6. 2 1/2. which now cannot be purchased for
less than Beef at 6, 7, 8, 9, sometimes 10. — & Mutton not
4 1/2 or 5 — sometimes 6. — 1758. 4. 5.

page 50th the Farmer does suppose there are means of rendering
Heath profitable by a mode of cultivation for the growth of Fern
by the destruction of the finest pasturage for the Sheep whence
the finest Wool is obtained, and as the Woollen Manufactory is the
staple trade of this Country, consequently the encouragement of the
growth of the finest species of Wool sh^d have the preference to the growth
of Fern - I remember to have heard it talk'd off, that the Farmers
were willing to advance their Cents on a Farm near the Downs
on condition of a liberty to turn & turn up a proportionable quantity
of the Turf - and they wth encouragement for great spaces
within my Memory on the Wiltshire Downs between Marlboro'
& the Downs - as well as on the other side towards Caln have been
plough'd up - & consequently the fine bite for Sheep destroyed. —



appear visionary in what I advance, even to those who know nothing of farming, (for as to those who do, I am certain they will assent to what I alledge) I am convinced that all my readers will acknowledge that beef and mutton is nearly double in price to what it was thirty years ago; and what is the reason of this? You will say, perhaps, because every thing is dearer in the same proportion;—but I deny the fact.—By undoubted vouchers which were laid before parliament a few years since;—the averaged price of corn during the last twenty years, hath been lower than the averaged price thereof during the last hundred years;—and my own observation assures me, that the articles of Covent Garden market, in general, during the summer months at least, are not risen in price, in the same proportion as the articles sold in Clare market: many articles of garden stuff are even cheaper than formerly; for instance, potatoes, &c.—Now butcher's meat having risen of late years to an exorbitant price, is not owing to the general decrease of the value of money compared with other things; nor to the combination of graziers, salesmen, and butchers; nor to any of the reasons generally assigned; but is owing chiefly to the prodigious number of inclosures which have been made throughout
England

England during these last thirty years. This is the principal reason, at least which I can assign; however, I will not be over tenacious of my opinion; if any one will assign a better reason, I will listen with attention.—Of this fact I am certain, that I am, and have been for some years past, obliged to give from four to five pounds per head for a kind of heifer, which I could have bought one year with another, twenty years ago, for fifty shillings, or three pounds.

BUT methinks I hear gentlemen say, you may make as many calculations and estimates as you please, but they can never convince us, that if by cultivation we make the ground that produced grass of only three inches length before it was cultivated, to produce grass of six or nine inches in length, of equal thickness and good quality, that such cultivation is a detriment to the nation, for certainly the more the ground is made to produce of any valuable commodity, the more benefit to the nation. I answer; this, being a *general* principle, so obvious and certain a truth, has greatly misled gentlemen, who talk or think on the subject, because they apply this *general* principle to all cases without exception; and I beg leave further to observe, that though it is devoutly to be wished, that all the
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commons in England would produce twice the herbage they now do ; yet even gold, as I have before observed, may be bought too dear. And therefore I cannot think it advisable for the sake of obtaining this good, to bring on an evil, which I apprehend more than adequate to the advantage gained. And if, as I apprehend, I have already demonstrated, that the enclosing and improving all the waste lands, will tend to double the price of butchers meat ; it will be an evil for which the encreased produce of the ground cannot compensate.

But the reader may say, it is an inexplicable paradox to assert, that the more provender is produced for rearing and fattening of cattle, the dearer they will be.—Yet, respecting the present argument, I will maintain it to be a paradox, far from being inexplicable. I have already observed, it is not the *plenty* or *scarcity* which makes an article dear for any long continuance of time, because the price depends on the *necessary charges and expences in the production of it*.—If a beggar comes to me for relief from hunger, and I give him half of a quartern loaf for nothing, no person will pretend to assert, that if he had bought a whole loaf at the baker's, and *given* seven-pence

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half-penny for it, that because he would, in that case, have had a greater plenty, that therefore it was cheaper to him than my half loaf was. And this is very nearly the case with regard to the cattle now fed on commons ; the little they get is not paid for, and therefore the owners can afford to sell them cheaper than if they paid for their food either by the way of rent of land, or by any other means.

IF what I have here stated be true, what becomes of Mr. Lamport's plan of cheapness of provisions by cultivating waste lands ?

BUT as what I have above advanced may appear new to many of my readers, I shall, in order more strongly to impress on their minds the truth of it, now enter more fully into the various *supposed* causes, which have usually been assigned of late years, of the evil *so justly* complained of. After which I shall submit to the reader's own judgment, whether any or all of these *supposed* causes, or the cause I shall assign, are the most probable.

I AM well aware, that while I am attributing the present high price of butchers meat to the late enclosures of waste lands throughout the
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kingdom, that I am at the same time combating against the united opinion of almost all the gentlemen who have hitherto written, or thought, on the subject; and I have moreover fully weighed in my mind, the dangers that usually attend the broaching of new doctrines. I know this generally meets, when not treated with affected contempt, with violent opposition, if not persecution.—However, those apprehensions have not deterred me from standing forth to declare what I think to be the truth.

HAD I found those who have written, or talked, on the subject united in one opinion respecting the present high price of butchers meat, I might perhaps have been more diffident respecting my own opinion. But I seldom have found three people meeting each others ideas entirely on the subject. For instance, I have known one person considered as very respectable in point of knowledge therein, affirm it to be owing to a monopoly of the opulent carcase butchers who forestall the beast markets in great cities. I have heard others advance, that it is owing to the wasteful consumption of butchers meat, in such houses as can afford it, in making soups, and other domestic wastes of provision, together

with the enormous quantity of animal food servants in great families wantonly eat, perhaps, five times as much as nature really requires : not to mention the quantities of wholesome meat which are daily thrown into the dust hole by wasteful cooks in gentlemens kitchens : or perhaps the still greater waste by the custom of retail butchers, particularly in summer time, in throwing their meat when it begins to turn a little putrid, into the river, rather than sell it at a low price to the poor.—All which evils have encreased in London and other great towns in England to a very great extent of late years ; and indeed I have heard some attribute the cause of the high price of butchers meat, to the enormous quantities of useless cats and dogs kept in this country ;—while others with more gravity and apparent sagacity, attribute the cause to what they pronounce to be evident to them, namely, the high rents and taxes, and of course the general high price of all the necessaries of life ; which a very lively writer some years since, by an allusion to the ass-man who brought sand from Hampstead, alledging that though there was no tax on *sand*, yet as he could not live without *porter*, and as that had had an additional tax imposed, he could not afford his *sand* at so low a price as formerly.

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I beg leave to add, as a further illustration of that ingenious writer's position, that a chair-bottomer came to my door, whom I employed in repairing my kitchen chairs, at the first breaking out of the American war, who charged me a penny per chair more than formerly; the reason he assigned was, the American war. I alledged there was no tax on *rufhes* on that account: he allowed what I said to be true, yet he insisted that tobacco had been raised, and his constitution required him to make use of a great deal.—Now, most, if not all these reasons appear at least plausible; and when they are considered in the aggregate as facts not to be controverted, for such they really are; they at first view appear not only plausible, but convincing; and therefore, till the cause of the evil which I have assigned be duly attended to, it is by no means to be wondered, when committees of the House of Commons have examined into the causes thereof from various individuals, several of which examinations have been instituted in my time, that they should have closed their enquiries with fruitless reports to the house respecting the matter, and that butchers meat should continue to grow dearer and dearer every year in spite of all these parliamentary enquiries.

Now

Now the above stated evils I cannot consider as the *principal* root of the disorder complained of, although I will not deny that they may, in some measure, contribute to encrease it, in as much as waste must tend to create scarcity, so far as that *waste* bears a proportion to *the means of necessary supply*.

I WILL now venture to give my reasons, as concisely as possible, why I apprehend the unnecessary consumptions before stated, viz. the waste of the butchers meat by the wanton consumption in gentlemens kitchens, &c. or by butchers throwing their stale meat away, or the unnecessary number of cats and dogs kept, &c. are not the root from which the evil complained of springs; leaving such gentlemen who delight in wandering in the mazes of fancy beyond the reach of common sense, to refine hereafter on the subject as much as they please. I apprehend, that however enormous those wastes of provisions may be, it may clearly be demonstrated they are not greater than the production of the lands of England is able to support;—because, if they were, we should find a scarcity of the articles consumed by such means, which is not the case; for though we have little or no importation thereof from foreign countries,

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no farmer or butcher complains, at least, that I have heard, of the *scarcity* of beasts, for he may always buy as many as he has occasion for, provided he has money sufficient to pay for them; and the great towns in England are all regularly supplied with good fat meat throughout the whole year, without the least appearance of *scarcity*.—In fact it is not the *scarcity* that we have any reason to complain of, it is only the *deariness* or *high price*.

ADMITTING these unnecessary consumptions are supported without any apparent *scarcity*, it serves as a proof of the *abundance* or *plenty* of butchers meat, notwithstanding the extreme *deariness* of this necessary article *.

I HAVE before observed, that *plenty* abstractedly considered, may not always produce *cheapness*;

* SINCE writing the above, a man of about three-score years of age, who has constantly worked on my farm for these twelve years past, observed to me that he wondered where all the beef and mutton went to, for he was very certain, that not one half of the butchers meat in poor labouring mens families in the country was now consumed as formerly, it being now so dear he was not able to buy it, and this I verily believe to be a fact; if so, what proportion can such wanton waste in gentlemens kitchens bear to the diminished consumption of animal food, which the labouring poor of this country were formerly accustomed to enjoy?

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and I have also above laid down, that there is now a great plenty of cattle in this country, notwithstanding the unnecessary waste as above set forth; and yet the *price* of butchers meat is nearly twice as dear as it was thirty years ago; therefore it must be the *charge of production*, which stamps the price of those articles, and this is the sum and substance of what I meant to prove.

HOWEVER, to leave the reader in no doubt respecting the positions I advance, I will now consider the effect which the encreased rents and taxes have had.

IF encreased rents and taxes have been the causes of this late encreased price of butchers meat, this surely should operate equally in respect to *all* the productions of farms. But I do not find that it operates in any thing like the same degree as in respect to the price of beasts; namely, 1st. sheep; 2dly. what is termed horned cattle and horses; the rearing of which cost so much more than formerly for the reasons I have before assigned. If the encreased rent and taxes operate in such a degree as to render the farming commodities twice as dear as they were thirty years ago; they should also operate
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in the same degree with respect to corn, &c. Now, respecting corn, I remember that article was extremely dear about twenty years ago, and the *exportation* thereof was alledged by the then popular writers, to be the cause; in consequence a parliamentary enquiry was instituted, and it was then proved in the House of Commons, that notwithstanding the decreased value of money, and increased taxation, corn had been cheaper on an average, (that is one year with another) during the then last fifty years, than at any other given period of equal time during the last hundred years; and I believe the averaged price since that time has not enhanced;—the satisfactory reason at that time given for its being cheaper than formerly, was, the bounty on the exportation of corn.—This shews, that it may be sometimes dangerous to rest our opinion on the positions of writers, however ingenious they may be.

I WILL now briefly compare the advanced price of butchers meat, and that of butter, cheese, eggs, and poultry, with their respective prices thirty years ago.—The last-mentioned articles have certainly risen in price, though not in the same proportion; for butchers meat has risen nearly double, or one hun-

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dred per cent. which I do not find to be the case with respect to any other articles of provision. For instance,

IN the summer season in London thirty years ago, fresh butter was from seven-pence to eight-pence per pound, now it is from nine-pence to ten-pence per pound, that is not quite one-third, or about thirty per cent. advance in price : a plump chicken half-grown was then sold for one shilling three-pence, to one shilling six-pence ; it is now sold for two shillings to two shillings three-pence, which is about one-half, or fifty per cent. encrease.

FRESH laid eggs might be bought at ten per groat, at this time eight per groat, viz. one-fourth more, or twenty-five per cent. Cheese three-pence half-penny, now five-pence per pound, or about fifty per cent.

THEREFORE, these farming productions do certainly sell at a higher price than formerly, as appears by the above statement, and there may be many good reasons to be adduced why they have so risen in price. I will allow the arguments made use of respecting the operation of taxes, together with the advanced rents of lands throughout the kingdom, by the above-men-

mentioned ingenious writer, on the high price of provision, and others, as far as they may reasonably be allowed to have their weight; but there are still other reasons to be assigned, independent of those, why butter, eggs, and poultry, should be dearer than formerly, and to which the advanced price of butchers meat has no relation; namely, farmers forbidding cottagers to keep any living creature besides themselves and children, under the pretence, that if they keep any beasts or poultry, they will steal from the farmers barns for their support; they also say, keep the cottagers poor and you will keep them industrious, &c. —but the real fact, I believe, is, that the farmers may have the whole right of common to themselves; and it is also well known, that there is a very great share of indolence and luxury of late introduced among farmers wives and daughters. Now, as general indolence increases the price of labour, it must advance the price in proportion to the prevailing indolence: as to cheese, the reasons assigned by the cheesemongers in London, why cheese has advanced in price, and at the same time is of worse quality than formerly, in a greater proportion than butter, was partly owing to the great demand in foreign countries, for Cheshire and other

cheeses, and partly to the luxury and laziness of farmers wives and daughters. The making of butter and the rearing of poultry also requires great attention and industry.

THOUGH the farmers, their wives and daughters have, in a great measure, forsaken the ancient system of industry; yet I do not find that the cottager or his wife, when they have encouragement, are in general deficient therein; but the enclosing of commons added to the tyrannical behaviour of farmers, has in many places deprived them of means of exerting their natural industrious disposition.

HAVING set forth the *peculiar* reasons why butter, cheese, and poultry should be dearer than formerly; and that notwithstanding all those *peculiarly* disadvantageous circumstances, these articles of provision have not advanced in price, in equal degree with butchers meat, which is not incumbered with the same *peculiar* disadvantages; it is evident that there must be some other cause for the high price of butchers meat, over and above such as relate to other provision, for there is no part of a farmer's duty which demands so little labour compared with its importance, as that of giving due attention to the rearing and fattening of cattle.

Now

Now respecting the monopoly of beasts, by carcase butchers, &c. which has been a popular subject of declamation of late years.—I can easily apprehend, that a set of men having an exclusive grant for vending any particular commodity, may establish a monopoly very injurious to the public; for instance, the exclusive right of vending tobacco, salt, &c. granted to the farmers-general in France, is fully known and severely felt: but then I have no conception of establishing a power of monopolizing a commodity so generally diffused throughout the nation, as that of butchers meat, which can be prejudicial to the state; unless government should grant an exclusive privilege to a certain body of men to deal it out at their own price. Because, however rich and artful a certain combination of carcase butchers may happen to be, for instance, in the city of London, to feed the market from time to time at their own price, yet without an exclusive right, such an attempt must always cause other combinations equally rich and artful, to be established to counteract their proceedings, and which indeed has been fully verified of late respecting the tea trade.—Therefore, I am persuaded such an idea exists only in the minds of those who are unacquainted with the real system of feeding the London markets

markets with butchers meat. I know many carcase butchers who are possessed of large grafs farms in the neighbourhood of London, for the purpose of making a repository for the surplus beasts, which may occasionally come to market, and there to keep them till the market becomes more scanty; and by this means they amass considerable fortunes. Hence many have been induced to consider this practice as a monopoly detrimental to the public; but I apprehend, on the contrary, though I allow they are actuated solely by mercenary motives, their employment to be very beneficial, operating in some respects in the same manner to preserve the city from famine; just as the bounty on the exportation of corn, when there is a surplus, acts with respect to the nation at large. For, did not these opulent butchers act in this manner, what would be the natural consequence? evidently this.—As the London market is principally fed with butchers meat from the distant counties, viz. Northamptonshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, &c. and a great part from counties still more distant; without this chain of commercial intercourse established between the grazier, salesman, and carcase butcher, the market would sometimes be greatly overstocked, insomuch that beasts
would

would fetch no price, and the grazier would be obliged to drive them home again. This would of course discourage other graziers from sending their beasts, till perhaps London might be in danger of starving.—I write the above merely as hints to those who have never thought fully on the subject; for I apprehend, when once pointed out, these truths are too obvious to require being dwelt on. I never exercised the trade of a Smithfield speculator in cattle, because other avocations would not admit of my giving due attention thereto; but I have always considered it both as a lucrative and a laudable employment, and without which, the inhabitants of London could not subsist.—But to come home to the fact; — beef this winter (1785) has been sold in the retail shops in London, from three-pence half-penny to six-pence per pound, viz.

Shins, &c. are not sold by the			
pound but I estimate them at			
about	-	-	$1\frac{1}{2}$ per pound
The inferior joints of the fore			
quarter at	-	-	$3\frac{1}{2}$ ditto
Common boiling pieces	-	-	$4\frac{1}{2}$ ditto
Prime roasting joints	-	-	6 ditto.

Now

Now, I bought twelve barren heifers last spring, (1784) which I fed on my grounds for eight months, and sold some of them in my own neighbourhood, and some of them at Smithfield January 1785, at a price which I rated at four-pence half-penny per pound, according to my estimate of the weight they would turn out when killed. And I can with great truth assure the reader, that the price of *lean cattle* was so extremely high when I bought them in, that they did not pay me six-pence per week per head for their keeping, and many of my neighbours fared still worse than myself, for some of them assured me, that the butchers did not allow them for their beasts scarcely the price they gave for them when lean. And in respect to my sheep, I was no better off.

THE reader may perhaps ask, if the carcase butcher in London gave me four-pence half-penny per pound for my beasts, and the retail butcher sold the beef at the above prices, where was their profit?—I answer, on what is called the 5th quarter, viz. the hide, fuet, &c. &c. which sufficiently paid the butcher for his trouble, though by no means produced an immoderate gain; and I believe the reader will readily allow that my gains were moderate enough.—In short,

short, my gains did not pay the rent of the grafs they ate. Then what is the cause of the present high price of butchers meat?—Why the *dearnefs* of lean stock; and what is the cause of that *dearnefs*?—After the reader has duly weighed in his mind the comparifon I have before made of the expence of rearing a beaft on a common, and that of rearing one on ground for which rent is paid, let him determine.

HOWEVER, as I would not willingly omit any one circumftance which may tend to give light on the fubject, I beg the reader would not immediately draw his conclufion, becaufe, I apprehend, previoufly there ftill remains circumftances to be taken into confideration that I have not yet touched on.

I HAVE hitherto attributed the caufe of the high price of butchers meat *folely* to the enclosing of wafte lands; yet I do not defire the reader to confider that circumftance more than the *principal caufe*. I will readily admit, that there are feveral concomitant circumftances which may tend to encrease the evil not yet touched on; for I am of opinion that the rearing of horfes for the purpofes of labour and luxury at

L home,

home, and for exportation abroad, beyond the usage of former times, deserves due attention on the present subject.

THE usage of horses in husbandry in preference to that of oxen, which was the ancient usage, I apprehend to be an evil, and an evil that I am afraid cannot easily be remedied, respecting many parts of England, because we cannot prevail on the farmer to do any thing contrary to what he thinks to be his own individual interest. I for instance, made a trial some years ago of a team of oxen instead of horses, and I thought from the local circumstances respecting of my farm, I was a loser by the change, and the reasons I could plainly make appear, if I imagined it any ways related to the present subject.

WHEN a horse is deemed for ever disabled from working he is given to the dogs.

WHEN the labouring ox is under the like circumstance, he is made fit for the butcher.

THE purport of this treatise is not intended to enquire into the *reasons* of the conduct of farmers, but merely to *state* their conduct as grounds
of

of argument to support my positions;—therefore I shall not enter into a discussion how far farmers have acted wisely respecting their own individual interests, in discontinuing of late to make use of oxen for draught, more than formerly; but I will by way of illustration, suppose that it is admitted, that there are thirty millions of acres of ground at present in this country in cultivation, and which is in general performed by horses; in that case there are nearly one million two hundred thousand horses required to cultivate those thirty millions of acres; and that it is admitted also, that a moiety of that labour was heretofore executed by oxen, the saving of the charge of keeping one half of the horses for the purpose of agriculture, or six hundred thousand was a great saving to the nation, because those oxen which were then kept for the purposes of labour, in lieu of horses, till they arrived at a proper age to make them good butchers meat were no national expence; on the contrary, a great national benefit; for I have myself experienced, that an ox kept to hard labour for two years, has fattened kinder and faster; than such which have done nothing during the same period but wallow in pastures.

WITH regard to the number of horses kept for luxury in this country, I apprehend it cannot

not at present, with any degree of accuracy be ascertained. However, when the tax imposed on horses last session has been fully carried into execution, we shall be able to draw some reasonable conjecture respecting the numbers, I say, *reasonable conjecture*, for I apprehend even then the number of evasions of the tax, in spite of all the efforts of the legislature, will destroy the *certainty* of the calculation. However, I will venture to put down as an estimate, that there are not less than four hundred thousand horses kept for the purposes of luxury in this kingdom, including those for the saddle and for draught, and that half that number is an encrease within these last fifty years.

LET the reader reflect therefore for a moment, on the increased number of six hundred thousand for the purposes of labour, and two hundred thousand for the purposes of luxury, making together eight hundred thousand horses more than was made use of in this country fifty years ago, and let him also consider that horses are kept upon nearly the same materials as oxen, it must have some effect upon the price of their reciprocal food. But this is not all; horses reared for the sake of exportation, though they render a little temporary benefit to the nation
by

by the price they are sold for in foreign markets; yet I apprehend they tend in like manner as the horses kept for luxury at home, to enhance the price of food for beasts; and I estimate the evil in this manner: few horses reared for exportation, or for the pleasure of gentlemen at home, being of a superior breed, are sold at four years old for less than thirty guineas a-piece. Now, I will suppose that the ground that will rear and maintain a horse, will not rear and maintain more than two oxen. Admitting that to be the case, and the accidents attending the rearing of either nearly the same, the farmer should sell his ox at four years old for fifteen guineas to make it as much worth his while to rear oxen as to rear those kind of horses.—And admitting for a moment that the horses sold to foreigners fetched fifty guineas a-piece, one with another, which at first view might appear a considerable national benefit, yet upon the same ground of argument, provided it became general, and there were no waste lands to breed oxen upon, it would naturally cause their price to rise to twenty-five guineas a head; and therefore another circumstance would arise, namely, that if no waste lands remained in England, no farmer would breed a low priced horse

horse for sale, for the purposes of common labour, which are now reared on commons; in such case what is to be done? The only remedies are, first to forbid the exportation of horses, and next to form a sumptuary law to limit the price of horses used at home; remedies which I apprehend would be difficult to put into execution, because the farmers in Yorkshire, and many other counties where the high priced horses are bred, would consider such acts as grievances, and threaten their landlords with leaving their farms, unless the rents were lowered; for we see such reasons operate respecting almost every national regulation: private interest militates against the public good; therefore this, I apprehend to be a very strong argument so far as it goes, against taking away the resource of waste lands for the breeding of cattle.

I BEG leave to observe, that though the facts which I have adduced in support of my opinions in the course of these sheets are true; yet I will not assert the same with regard to the exactness of my calculations and estimates; however, I am convinced there are no such inaccuracies as can invalidate my general positions.

Indeed,

Indeed, an estimate according to the meaning of the word is uncertain in its own nature. When I make use of estimates, I mean them not so much to *prove* as to *illustrate*.

Now, therefore, though I cannot give much credit to the reasons for the high price of butchers meat, which have been cited, viz. the great unnecessary consumption, because we do not find it produces a *scarcity*, which must be the immediate evil resulting therefrom; nor can I attribute it to the encreased rents and taxes, because we do not find the price of corn much affected thereby, nor any other article of provision in equal degree; much less can I give credit to its being owing to a monopoly; because I am confident no such monopoly does, or ever can exist for any length of time, without an exclusive grant for that purpose. Yet, I will readily admit, that the great encrease of the breed and maintenance of horses, compared with former times, may, very properly, come in for a considerable share of the blame, because that circumstance interferes greatly with the *charges of production* of butchers meat; and which I lay down to be *the only basis on which is founded the averaged price of all commodities whatever*.

THERE-

THEREFORE, supposing for the sake of illustration, that the increased price of butchers meat from three-pence per pound, to five-pence per pound, compared with the price thirty years ago, viz. two-pence per pound advanced, is owing to the above-mentioned causes in the following proportion.—The rise of one half-penny per pound on account of the increased breeding and maintaining of horses; and one penny half-penny on account of the number of commons which have been enclosed within these thirty years; and that supposition being allowed, the question is answered at once, What is the cause of the dearth of butchers meat? moreover, admitting these to be the only, or indeed the principal causes of that evil, it is a matter of indifference to me, what proportions each of them bear in producing the evil; therefore I wish the reader may adopt such proportion as he pleases.

IN order to comprize the foregoing arguments in as small a compass as possible, I will now state them by way of debtor and creditor, in two separate statements, viz.

I. THE

I. THE consequences which have already attended the enclosing of commons during the last thirty years.

II. THE probable consequences which may hereafter attend the enclosing the wastes still remaining.

Statement of GREAT BRITAIN's
CREDITOR, with such as have
Lands during these last thirty

Debtor.

l. s. d.

I. To the nobility, gentry,
clergy, &c. for the produce
arising from the draining
and cultivating of bogs,
fens, marshes, moors, &c.
which before they were
cultivated, were of little
or no use, and which may
be computed at the sum of
per annum - -

II. To ditto, for the increased
produce arising from the
cultivation of such lands
as were formerly made use
of as wastes for the rear-
ing of cattle, over and

above

present Account of DEBTOR and
caused the Enclosures of Waste
years.

Creditor.

l, s, d,

By the said nobility, gentry,
and clergy, for the debt
due to the farmers, cot-
tagers, &c. who have been
deprived by the cultivation
of the wastes of the benefits
they formerly derived there-
from, and for which they
have as yet received no
compensation -

By ditto for the deprivation of
the means of purchasing in
a great measure, butchers
meat, by the poor on ac-
count of the dearness there-
of, as before stated -

Debtor.

l. s. d.

above the benefit the nation
received thereby in their
former state - -

Creditor.

l. s. d.

By ditto for the tax they have imposed on the inhabitants at large, of at least *one-penny half-penny* per pound on butchers meat, over and above the price thirty years ago.

N. B. On a supposition that there are ten millions of inhabitants in Great Britain, and that each inhabitant, one with another, consumes one quarter of a pound of meat per day, this tax would amount to the nation at large, to the enormous sum of upwards of *fifteen thousand pounds* per day, or upwards of *five millions sterling* per annum.

State-

Statement of GREAT BRITAIN'S
CREDITOR, with respect to the Plan
Land in case that Plan should be

Debtor.

l. s. d.

I. To advantages derived
from the draining of bogs,
&c. that still remained,
previously to the adopting
the plan - -

II. To the encreased pro-
duce arising from the cul-
tivation of the waste lands,
over and above the pro-
duce received therefrom at
present, by rearing cattle,
&c, on the same. -

N. B.

future Account of DEBTOR and
of universal Cultivation of Waste
adopted.

Creditor.

l. s. d.

I. By the debt due to the
farmers, cottagers, &c.
who would be deprived by
the cultivation of the waste
lands, of the benefits they
formerly derived therefrom,
and for which they justly
claim a compensation -

II. By the deprivation of the
means of purchasing but-
chers meat among all the
lower classes of people in
general, on account of the
dearness thereof, it being
upwards of nine-pence per
pound - - -

III.

N. B. THESE profits Mr. Lamport has computed at twelve millions sterling per annum; but as he has made no allowance for the inferior quality of most of the waste lands, compared with those at present in cultivation—it is apprehended that his calculation is much too high.

Creditor.

l. s. d.

- III. By declension of our manufactures, on account of the dearth of provision
- IV. By the sums remitted abroad for the import of lean beasts, in order to keep down the price - - -
- V. By the tax or encreased high price of butchers meat of four-pence half-penny per pound, more than it was when the act took place for the universal cultivation of the waste lands - - -
- VI. By the advanced price of horses for labour, and of course of labour itself -
- VII. By the loss the nation would sustain by the diminished quantity of wool and hides produced, because as the lower classes of people would be deprived of the means of eating beef or mutton, it is reasonable to suppose that there would not be above one third part of the oxen and sheep bred in this country as at present

WITH many other disadvantageous articles too tedious to mention. To the articles which have been inserted, I have omitted to add any specific estimated sum, leaving the reader to fill up the blanks agreeable to his own judgment or fancy, and then let him strike the balance of profit and loss, that he may in some measure be able to form an opinion on the subject.—There is one article in each of the above statements, which must strike the reader equally with myself: In the first estimate I have stated, that the present high price of butchers meat compared with the price it sold for thirty years ago, viz. an encrease of upwards of *one-penny half-penny per pound*, operates as a tax upon the nation, equal to the annual sum of *five millions*, or about equal to the amount of all the taxes imposed on the nation for the purposes of carrying on the late unhappy American war.—Will not the reader join with me in exclaiming, how is it possible for any nation to bear such rapid accumulations of national burthens?—Yet, if my positions be true, we are continuing to frame new acts of parliament every year, in order still to accumulate on the nation fresh burthens. I apprehend that the general enclosures of the waste lands added to the encreased breed of horses,

horses, would soon cause butchers meat to be as dear, and consequently become as great a luxury, as cod, turbot, or venison are now at the London market.—In that case, could it be supposed that our manufacturers and labourers would remain in this country, to work merely for bread? Surely no! Unless some eloquent Bramins should emigrate from India, by order of the governments at Bengal, Madras, &c. and propagate the Gentoo faith among our common people; then indeed should they adopt that religion, they might stay at home, because they would think it a sin to make use of any animal food.

HOWEVER, as I should be sorry to omit noticing any argument, which, when hereafter urged, might seem to disprove my positions, I will observe, that it may be said, the poor might be fed on pork, which appears from ancient writings to have been almost the sole animal food of our ancestors some centuries back; the food for which animals, at that time, was chiefly grass and acorns, which at present is not the case; and though at this time some hogs may be maintained on waste lands, yet for the most part they are kept by the offal corn scattered in farm yards, therefore if there were

more lands cultivated for corn, more of such offal would be produced, and of course a greater plenty of hogs at as low a price as, or perhaps lower than, at present. It may also possibly be said, though as to cows and sheep, according to the present mode of rearing and fattening them, it is true they must have a range of pasture during the summer months at least, which has been practised in this country in every age, yet there is no absolute necessity of continuing that mode. I will in some measure allow the justness of the observation respecting oxen and cows, for I have been convinced by experience, that *those* cattle may be maintained and fattened merely by straw and corn; for I have been an eye witness of the fact, in Spain and Portugal, and in other countries where the nature of the soil and the intense heat of the sun prevents the grass from growing sufficiently long to serve as food for oxen during the summer months. But perhaps our present breed of cattle being accustomed to another mode of living during the summer might not thrive so well by such food. However, I am inclined to think, that if such dry food was mixed with turnips, cabbages, carrots, &c. they might when once used to it thrive very well. Be that however as it may, I am persuaded it would be very difficult to persuade the English farmers in
general

general to adopt such mode, and till that mode be generally adopted, the *mere practicability* will render us little service.

WITH regard to sheep, I do not recollect to have observed them to have been stall-fed in any country during the whole year. I can aver so far as my own personal knowledge goes, there are no other means practised of rearing and maintaining them during the summer months at least, than that of allowing them to seek their subsistence at large, on either cultivated or waste lands.

Now respecting the breeding of pork and the future price thereof, in case all the waste lands should be enclosed; I admit there is, at first view, considerable weight in that argument: but when we consider that one article of provision advancing in price, makes the rest of the articles rise in nearly the same proportion, which daily experience verifies; it is reasonable to suppose, that pork, in case the price of other provision should much encrease, the price of that article of provision also would increase in like proportion, therefore the extraordinary food for those animals in consequence of universal cultivation, compared with the present, might perhaps
be

be only an additional advantage to the farmers, without being a public benefit respecting the general price of provision.

ADMITTING then, that butchers meat would be at the price of *nine-pence half-penny per pound*, that is *four-pence half-penny* dearer than at present, and an equal consumption as now, it would then follow, that if my calculation be true as stated in my first estimate, viz. that the present encreased price of *one-penny half-penny* operates as a tax on the public, to the amount of *five millions sterling per annum*, then it will naturally follow that the four-pence half-penny in addition would make still an encreased burthen of *fifteen millions sterling per annum*;—a frightful calculation indeed ! But as I have already observed, that the lower classes of people would be in a great measure deprived of the means of eating butchers meat, there would not probably then be more than one third part consumed as is at present; therefore, in that case, the estimate of *fifteen millions per annum* should be reduced to only *five millions per annum*, and which annual sum would then fall entirely upon the higher classes of people; a burthen so great, that I should not apprehend the people of this country, however opulent they
may

may be imagined to be, would be able to bear; especially when the already present incumbrances are taken into consideration.

WHEN I observe my countrymen view, with calmness and apparent unconcern, these impending evils, by gradual steps approaching them, I cannot help recollecting the old story of the Irishman in the packet-boat, who upon being told that the ship was sinking, very composedly replied, what is that to me, I am only a passenger?

I APPREHEND that the reader will willingly allow, that the increased price imposed on any article of life is a grievance, and to the individual who is obliged to pay that advanced price, it is an equal grievance, as if it arose from a tax or duty expressly imposed by the legislature.

HOWEVER excellent in general our system of government may be, yet it certainly gives great scope for individual interests to supersede the general good.

IF the nobility, gentry, and clergy, who in conjunction with the King, form the body
of

of the legislature, should, assisted by the lawyers, be actuated by individual interests, contrary to the general national good, what benefit do we derive from our so much boasted system of government? In short, what have the people of this country to apprehend in a length of time, but a worse situation than if they were governed by even an absolute monarch? For, however wicked *he* may be, provided he has common sense, he must certainly wish the prosperity of his people, if it be only to gratify his avarice or ambition, in plundering them from time to time of their property.—But a King of this country cannot plunder his subjects; nor can he pass any law for the benefit of his subjects, without the approbation and consent of the Lords and Commons; consequently, parliaments being his advisers in every national regulation, should those advisers be in general more actuated by individual advantages, than by the motives of public good; in what respect are we better, nay, in what respect are we not worse, than if we were under an absolute monarchy?

I WOULD not have the reader imagine that I am now pleading in favour of monarchy; there is not an Englishman who admires or wishes to
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support or maintain the constitution of this country more than myself. I mean only to suggest to the people who now compose the legislature, that I apprehend they are misled respecting the enclosing of waste lands, and to recommend to them to investigate this subject more fully than hitherto.

I PASS over such whose only aim is to satisfy their love of temporary power, or to acquire wealth for their momentary wants, conveniences, or pleasures, however great their abilities are acknowledged to be; but I would wish to address myself to those who have a more solid ambition, namely, that of acquiring and establishing permanent and opulent fortunes and noble families: I desire them to consider the grounds on which their object of enclosing waste lands is founded, before they proceed further in their system of conduct. For if the *means* [whereby they acquire their *nominal* wealth tend to depreciate the *intrinsic* value of that wealth, the acquirement is in a great measure an imaginary benefit, as the *means* defeat the *end and purpose*.

As I apprehend this to be the case, respecting the enclosures of waste lands; I wish the nobility, gentry, clergy, &c. possessed of landed

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property, to reflect a moment, and perceive that the rental of an estate, however punctually paid, is of no further value than the number or quantity of commodities it can for the time being procure. And if the necessaries of life are, by their ill conduct, rendered *twice* as dear as formerly, they, although the rentals of their estates may be encreased *one third*, are yet not gainers but losers by such encreased rentals. Let them also consider what I have stated, and I believe truly stated, that the encreased price of butchers meat during the last thirty years, operates as a national grievance, nearly equal to all the taxes imposed on the nation during the late American war, viz. about *five millions sterling per annum*.—Let them dwell upon that subject for some time, it is a consideration too important to be neglected; and then form their opinions on the causes thereof.

I BELIEVE that in a preceding part of this work it has already been observed, that it is a fashionable assertion, *that commons in their present state are productive of much evil and no good*, therefore I fear many readers will be prejudiced against the truth of the positions here laid down. And if the higher classes of people in general are determined to set their faces against conviction,

tion, and unite in saying, *delenda est Carthago*, *there must be no waste lands*, my efforts in their defence will prove fruitless. I am sorry to say, that many conversations I have had with gentlemen on the subject, have thus abruptly finished. That such doctrine should have been propagated and adopted among the superior ranks of people in point of property, general knowledge, and of course influence is not matter for wonder; they for the most part, I apprehend have been biassed by a perspective view of personal advantages accruing to themselves by the enclosing of commons, viz. the people of large landed property, the clergy and lawyers in general—the first class, because the enclosures will probably render them greater rentals.—To the second it may afford an encrease of tythes; and to the third, a multiplicity of business respecting leases, &c. and while these formidable bodies are united together, to turn a deaf ear to the reasons of the farmer and the murmurs of the poor, we may still expect to see every session fresh violations of the natural rights of the cottagers, and the legal rights of the small freeholders and copyholders; a species of legal rapine justified by acts of the legislature, under the plausible pretext of public good. It may indeed be said, that what people consent to give up, cannot be deemed an

act of violence, and the law declares that the consent of three fourths of the inhabitants, in respect to number and value of possession must be first obtained before any such act can pass. But this I apprehend to be mere sophistry, for those must be very obstinate or very ignorant, who will not allow that coaxing, bribing, and threatening, together with many other arts, which superiors make use of, will very often induce the inferiors to give consent to things, which they are convinced will be to their future disadvantage.—I believe few or no enclosures have been made of late years, excepting marshes, bogs, fens, &c. on account of the public good; and indeed it is doubtful whether even those services, although they are undoubtedly a public good, were executed merely from that motive. But I am convinced that no waste lands which afforded a sound wholesome dry herbage, were ever enclosed with the real approbation of the inferior inhabitants in any parish in England, and such are undoubtedly the majority in point of number in every parish.

I UNDERSTAND that it has also been the fashion among gentlemen of late years, to assert that all the cottagers are rascals and scoundrels, and that cottages on commons serve only as
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dens to breed up thieves. That there are many scoundrels among them, I will readily allow; and I believe the same may be said as truly of every class of people in this country. That perhaps may be denied, however, I also believe, that though their knowledge is very limited compared to the superior classes of mankind, yet their minds are as clear in what they know, and are possessed of as much natural sagacity, honesty, and industry, as any other classes of people in the nation. I suspect some of my readers may laugh at the assertion, but an old writer who I apprehend knew more of the disposition of the English clown, than all the modern writers on farming, hath said, "*He that will be beaten with brains shall never wear any thing handsome about him;*" therefore I say, let them laugh on; and I will still further sound the praises I think the clowns justly merit. The manners of a true English clown or cottager uncorrupted by the vices found in cities and great towns, I believe, are very little known by gentlemen in general. It is not to be learnt by casually conversing with a *London vulgar*, though he may have been *born in the country*; nor men of the same species to be found in other great towns, nor is it by the behaviour and conversation of the domestic servants in the houses of people of fortune, nor even by those clowns
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usually met with at inns and other public-houses on the high-roads, or the places adjacent throughout Great Britain, much less those lurching fellows, whom almost every country affords, and are so useful to gentlemen on their sporting parties, who in general are known in their neighbourhood to be the most idle rascals in the parishes wherever they live.—No, should a gentleman wish to know the disposition of a real clown, let him reside for some time in the retired parts of England, where the cottagers are still uncorrupted by the commercial refinements of modern times, and endeavour by a free and affable behaviour and conversation to learn the disposition and opinions of the clowns he there may find. And then I apprehend, if he be a man of penetration and candour, he will acknowledge that he has met with clowns who deserve a much better character than is usually bestowed upon them, and that they are far from being destitute of the natural honest feelings of humanity.—Reader, do not mistake me, I am only an advocate for the honest industrious clown. I will not at present enquire into the moral or physical causes, why it should run in the blood of some families among the clowns, to be generally idle and vicious, in other families to be in general honest and industrious, a fact,

fact, however, which I have frequently observed, and which I doubt not to be the case throughout England; yet I am convinced that the English clowns in general are inclined to be honest and industrious, rather than to be idle and dishonest; and for the most part I am apt to believe that it is either the ill usage or bad example of such as deem themselves their superiors, rather than their own natural feelings and inclinations, which induce them to deviate from honesty. I have known clowns of such stern virtue, that being deprived by accidents of the means of earning their livelihood, have patiently remained in their cottages in the cold winter months, destitute of victuals or fire, rather than rob their neighbour of a chicken, or a farmer's hedge of a stake. Perhaps it may be said that such circumstances of distress can seldom, if ever, happen to an industrious pauper, because the poor-laws have made a provision for them in case of sickness or other accidents. In my parish last year, an industrious family with four children, the eldest only twelve years of age, would probably have been starved had it not been for the private charity of some individuals, who accidentally heard of their distress.—The husband and wife belonged to a parish about twenty miles distant, therefore,
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the parish in which they resided would not afford them assistance. The wife having been brought to bed of a child a few days before her husband's illness, and he lying at the point of death with a putrid fever; a removal to their own parish would probably have been attended with almost immediate death. Besides, I have further to observe, that the ill treatment paupers frequently suffer in parish work-houses is so great, that they as much dread entering them, as even being sent to a gaol.—The wife of a cottager, who has constantly worked for me many years past, was bed-ridden for twelve months, and was, during the whole of that time, attended by a nurse, and frequently by an apothecary; the expence of which run away with the greatest part of her husband's weekly earnings, insomuch that I understood that he expended for his own living scarcely one groat a day, though I allowed him eighteen-pence per day. I said to him, as your wife is a parishoner, I wonder you do not apply to the parish for relief. He answered, *I have applied, and the officers will allow me nothing for her, but they said, if I would send her to them, they would take care of her; but I will live upon bread and water for seven years, rather than she shall die by ill treatment in a parish workhouse.* Perhaps this may be called

called pride; however, it is a kind of pride which the most industrious poor are the most liable to entertain.

I HAVE now several cottagers at my farm whom I have constantly employed for some years past, and who enjoy the right of common in the manner which I have before described.—These labourers I take a pleasure in encouraging. I frankly own to the reader, that I not only find a pleasure, but also an advantage in it, because I can more safely rely on the industry and integrity of such who have some degree of property and character to lose, and who, perhaps, may also have a distant prospect some time or other of becoming farmers themselves, than the poor devil who is destitute of every kind of property, and whose only hope is to be able to work, and thereby to gain a subsistence from day to day, as a slave as long as he lives. I find in general, a greater emulation to do their duty in those young men who have a little property, than the others, and I consider emulation to be the root of both public and private virtue. I also apprehend, that any man elevated to a situation superior to that of the cottagers, and having intercourse with them, who thinks and acts otherwise, is both ignorant and tyrannical. He is

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ignorant,

ignorant, because a young labouring man's exertions in work, when by his master's good usage he is encouraged, he reckons nothing; for he works with good will; but he grudges every service to a master who treats him with churlishness; and to suppose that a clown ought to serve his master merely from fear, is a tyrannical idea, unworthy the breast of any one who assumes the character of a gentleman.

I do not pretend to possess more humanity than my neighbours, nor do I mean here to appeal to the passions of mankind on a subject which demands the most unbiaſſed and deliberate judgement. I mean merely to ſtate facts as they are, and then to leave reaſon, not paſſion or prejudice, to decide upon the queſtion; therefore though the comforts and other excitements to induſtry, which the clowns derive, as I have before ſtated, from their right of commonage on waſte lands, may perhaps operate on the minds of ſome of ſuperior rank and great ſenſibility, ſo as to inſpire them with a wiſh that the clowns ſhould ſtill continue to be equally happy as heretofore, namely, that they ſhould be able by the means of thoſe commons, together with the induſtry of themſelves, their wives and children, to rear up their families in comfort and credit,

credit, and to lay up a little store of wealth for their support in old age; without being burthenfome to a parish; and also at their death to leave a little property behind them for their children: yet, perhaps these circumstances ought not to weigh much in the present argument.—However, I cannot but own, that I myself have some degree of pleasure in finding a cottager possessed of the means of making a gift to a new born child of a live ewe lamb as her portion; because I have known instances, when a lucky child hath found itself, at ten or twelve years of age, hereby in possession of, perhaps, half a dozen, or half a score ewes and wethers, the produce of whose wool, &c. hath found the child in pocket-money, till she has arrived to eighteen or twenty years of age; this little flock, together with her other little earnings, has served as a portion with her to an industrious young man, who marries her; and which has greatly contributed to support them and their children: but the disposition of clowns is a subject of great extent; and therefore I may possibly hereafter treat it still more fully,

If what I have here stated should appear to the world to be truth, I shall be happy; not from a supposition that I have a right to claim merit from the investigation, for I well know the

truths I have set forth are equally obvious to, and as well understood by, not only every farmer in my neighbourhood, but almost every cottager who works under the farmer.—No, my happiness would arise merely from the supposition, that in that case, this work might tend to open the eyes of the legislature respecting the future regulations of the system of agriculture in this country ; but as Tasso makes his lover to say,

Bramo assai, poco spero, e nulla chieggo *.

I HAVE professed myself to be a farmer, and I glory in the title, and as such I write ; however, those who pay more regard to what speculative writers may deliver on that subject, than what farmers may set forth thereon, will probably hold me very cheap when I make this declaration.

HOWEVER, be that as it may, in order to induce my readers to believe that I have not been actuated by self-interest in this publication, I very truly assure them, that as an individual, I consider the further enclosures of waste lands throughout Great Britain, to be rather a benefit than an injury to myself ; because, I apprehend,

* I wish much, hope little, and require nothing.

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from certain particular circumstances, those waste lands wherein I am most particularly interested, will never be enclosed but by a general act of parliament for that purpose, which God forbid should ever happen ! and I consider, the more the wastes are enclosed, the more valuable those still remaining will be to such as have a right of common thereon ; that is to say, in proportion to the increased price of lean cattle ; because, should the enclosures go on to such a degree as to cause the greater part of the cattle to be reared on enclosed grounds, for which high rent is paid ; I apprehend, the commons then remaining would be of little or no benefit to the public at large, respecting the price of butchers meat, but merely a partial benefit to such individuals as may hereafter have a right of commonage on the waste lands then remaining ; for it is evident, that when those who then should have a right of common should drive their cattle to a fair for sale, they would not abate one fix-pence of the *market* price, on account of their beasts having been *bred on a common, for which they pay no rent*, consequently the advanced price would be so much clear gain to *them*, over and above their former profits.

BEFORE I take leave of the reader, I beg to make still another remark, viz. The inhabitants

tants of France are subsisted respecting animal food, much more by the cattle raised and fed on commons or waste lands, than by the lands in cultivation; and should the court of Versailles adopt a plan similar to that which Mr. Lamport has recommended, I am persuaded, considering the poverty of the farmers, the high taxations of the government, the oppressions of their landlords, and the low state of the art of agriculture in that country in general, the poor would in consequence of the high price of butchers meat, be in danger of starving.

I HOPE when the combined circumstances I have stated relative to the consequences of enclosing the wastes, are duly considered, *some* gentlemen may become converts to my opinion, and if I find hereafter that the foregoing sheets tend to any good purpose, I may on a future occasion, give some further thoughts on other branches of agriculture, which are not touched on herein; particularly among other things on the best means of improving waste lands, on the supposition they are still to remain as commons; and also on the farther improvement of the enclosed grounds and common fields now in cultivation; in the mean time, I recommend the present work to the readers most serious consideration.

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THE Editor begs leave to remind the reader, that he has occupied a farm for many years past, but as he has also at the same time been frequently absent from it by his avocations in London and elsewhere; he cannot reasonably be supposed to have such accurate knowledge and extensive experience, as his friend has displayed in the course of his treatise. Yet, however, he has the means of making himself acquainted in some degree with the opinions of the farmers in his neighbourhood. He, upon enquiry, finds that they almost unanimously adopt the opinions of the writer of the foregoing sheets; as will appear by the following representation made some few months since by a number of farmers against enclosing the waste lands consisting of upwards of one thousand five hundred acres, and the common fields, belonging to a parish not many miles from the Editor's country residence.—The property of that parish is divided into many hands, and therefore the opinion of one or a few could not govern the opinions of the whole; the representation was as follows.

“ WE

“ W E the under-written the Freeholders,
 “ Copyholders, Leaseholders, and other
 “ the Inhabitants of the Parish of ———
 “ in the County of ——— beg leave
 “ to set forth,

“ THAT although the enclosing of bogs
 “ and other uselefs lands in this kingdom may
 “ be highly beneficial; yet we apprehend the
 “ enclosing wood-lands, and found land fit
 “ for pasturage now lying as commons to the
 “ various parishes in England, more particu-
 “ larly those which belong to the parish of
 “ ——— is highly detrimental for the
 “ following reasons,—and,

“ I. That the breeding and rearing of cattle
 “ on commons where no rent is paid for the
 “ same, in preference to the rearing them in
 “ enclosed pastures, set at a high rent, tends
 “ to keep down the price of lean cattle.—
 “ And we also apprehend, that the price of
 “ such stock being now near one hundred per
 “ cent. dearer than twenty years ago, is owing
 “ chiefly to the late enclosing of commons and
 “ waste lands throughout the kingdom, and
 “ which has of course raised the price of but-
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chers meat near two-pence in a pound more
than formerly.

“ II. That the wood-lands in the said parish,
“ provided they are not grubbed up, being
“ well stocked with thriving young oaks, may,
“ and certainly will, if properly managed, be
“ not only a source of timber for the navy in
“ a future time, but also a constant benefit to
“ the parish by the sale thereof, for the relief
“ of the parish rates.

“ III. That provided the said common be
“ enclosed, many hundreds of poor inhabitants
“ in the said parish will be reduced to distress;
“ as they will be deprived of their present bene-
“ fit of rearing horned cattle, pigs, &c. and
“ furnishing themselves with fuel in the winter,
“ &c. and the consequences will be immedi-
“ ately felt by the parish at large, by the en-
“ crease of the poors rates, the breaking and
“ carrying away hedges and other petty larcen-
“ nies, that the distresses of the poor will re-
“ duce them to; and which is and must always
“ be experienced where the poor have not
“ commons and wood lands to assist them.—
“ And in short, we cannot see any benefit to
“ the nation in general, nor to any individual,
“ will arise by enclosing the said common, ex-

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“ cept to the land-owners, who may thereby
 “ be enabled to raise their rents at the expence
 “ and detriment of the parish at large.

“ AND in respect to the inclosing of corn
 “ fields which lie in common, we apprehend
 “ that any person who has travelled much over
 “ England, and has made his observations on
 “ the subject, must give the preference in ge-
 “ neral to the crops of corn in common fields
 “ to those in inclosures in point of clearness
 “ from weeds, and quality of grain.—And
 “ this we apprehend to be owing, in a great
 “ measure to the enclosed farmer having it
 “ more in his power to be a floven than those
 “ who hold lands in common fields mixed
 “ with their neighbours; and also that hedges
 “ and trees are great enemies to the growth of
 “ corn.

“ 18th October, 1784.”

In consequence of this paper being delivered
 to the various Freeholders, Copyholders, and
 other Inhabitants of that parish, previously to
 the parochial convention held for the purpose
 of considering upon the propriety of inclosing
 the waste lands and common fields in the said
 parish,

parish, which was announced in a pompous manner by printed notifications published by a set of people who fancied they might be benefited thereby, the most numerous vestry was assembled, consisting of gentry, farmers, cottagers, and other inhabitants, &c. that ever was known in that parish within the memory of man: every thing, (notwithstanding the multitude assembled) was conducted in the most peaceable and quiet manner; and after the person who moved for the meeting had delivered his opinions respecting the inclosure, and a little conversation being held upon the subject; the question was put, *Whether it would be proper to inclose the waste ground of that parish?* there was but one hand held up *for the inclosure*, which was the person who proposed the question. Another question being afterwards proposed, *Whether it be the opinion of the vestry that the waste lands should remain uninclosed?* there was a universal holding up of hands, except by the person who moved for the inclosure, with an almost universal huzza of triumph, frequently repeated.

THE Editor cannot omit making a further remark, before he takes leave of the reader, viz. untill he had been a practical farmer for
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some time, he entertained the general opinion adopted among gentlemen, that suffering waste lands to lye uncultivated was injurious to the nation; and when he travelled over a dreary and, what he imagined to be, a useless common, he lamented that the legislature should neglect to cause those waste lands to be rendered in an equally beautiful and rich state of cultivation as the adjacent enclosures; upon a supposition that it would not only add to the beauty of the country; but also to the general benefit, because he thought the more plenty there was, the more blessings the nation would enjoy; but after much experience and an accurate examination of the subject; he found waste grounds of greater utility than he had apprehended.—And after perusal of this treatise in manuscript, he saw their uses in a much stronger light than they had ever before appeared to him. However, as he is sensible that those who adopt an hypothesis, are frequently apt to be too sanguine respecting the truth thereof; he wishes to reserve his opinion on the matters contained in the foregoing sheets, until he has received further information on the subject.

F I N I S.

